

## Art Talk:

## Theater and film: two distinct worlds

A few weeks ago, *The Rider News* ran a column by one of its own editors, Vincent Civitillo (Feb. 11). In the column, Civitillo expressed his concerns about what is considered high culture and what is not. He defended movies, claiming that they are just as respectable as plays. Even though some may disagree with what he had to say, I felt he was right and that more needed to be said.

I admit that there are a lot more stupid movies out there than good ones (as a true movie fan that doesn't stop me from watching them), but a handful of Pauly Shore "flicks" bloated with bathroom humor and brainless jokes shouldn't ruin or even affect the credibility of the entire art form. So what is it that is so devastatingly offensive about movies that makes them second-best to theater?

Whether I'm taking on the role of reader or writer, I am foremost interested in a well-told story, no matter how it is told. When taking this into consideration, the line between theater and film is very much blurred to me. I ignore the aesthetic differences of the two arts and am more interested in determining which would be more appropriate and effective in telling the story. But still, the two are completely different artistic outlets with different purposes and methods. Their differences should be embraced, allowing both arts to be recognized as brilliant in their own rights.

There are many differences between plays and movies, such as theater's energy of a live performance that cannot be simulated in a movie, but can be made up for with the intimacy that is attainable in film. There are many pros and cons for both arts when compared to each other, but they should only be compared to each other for the sake of taste and not artistic value.

I think it is a lost cause to try comparing the artistic value of plays to movies, just as

one should not and cannot compare Michelangelo's three-dimensional statue "David" to his two-dimensional painting of the Sistine Chapel. While one is an actual physical structure with depth and crevasses that, with the assistance of physics and light, create shading, the other is nothing more than an imitation of three-dimensional figures. A painting can only fake depth and shading with the application of different densities of color. Still, both were intricately created with such detail that makes them both masterpieces in entirely different categories.

To me, it's simple. Sculptors and painters, although sometimes the same person as in Michelangelo's case, are different types of artists with different talents. In the case of theater and films, the two have different concentrations. In plays, attention is given to dialogue and the execution of it, whereas in films there is more attention given to action and motion. Dialogue can tell a story one way, while action can tell a story a different way.

Just as the Sistine Chapel and "David" are considered to be art classics, both *Death of a Salesman* and *Citizen Kane* have been able to find their way into the American dramatic canon. There is room for both as icons. What Arthur Miller cannot express to us on the stage, Orson Welles makes up for on the big screen, and vice versa. No one should ever have to compare the famous play to the equally famous movie, unless he or she is arguing which of the two, Willy Loman or Charles Foster Kane, led the more tragic life. But still, who are we to judge? You can't really put a value on a character's life.



Jodi Cantor



## 'HISTORY'

## FROM PAGE 8

the Women's Suffrage Movement, the first step toward civil rights for women. In 1856, New Zealand became the first nation to grant women the right to vote. This right, however, was not legalized in the United States until 1919, a full 63 years after New Zealand.

Even though many think former president Clinton was only good for cheating on his wife, he did pass the Freedom Access to Clinic Entrances Act (FACE) in 1994, which makes it

illegal to commit violence against reproductive health clinics such as Planned Parenthood. In addition, his wife has become one of the most powerful political women in history.

To this day, women are still unjustly "compensated" for equal occupations in America, receiving 73 cents to each dollar earned by their male coworkers. In 1964 the Civil Rights Act was passed. In 1972 the Supreme Court extended the right to birth control to single people. In 1978 the Pregnancy Discrimination Act began to protect the jobs of pregnant woman by making it illegal for employers to fire or demote pregnant women. This is just a very small portion of what feminism has done for our country and this is our month to appreciate it.

## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY ...

## MAR. 4, 1789

The U.S. Constitution goes into effect after being ratified by the American colonies.

## MAR. 5, 1770

The Boston Massacre leaves five American colonists dead.

## MAR. 10, 1862

The U.S. government issues its first paper money.

## Music Lover:

## Where's the originality?

John Lennon once said that the Beatles were the biggest thieves of the 1960s. It is true that many of the Beatles' hits were not 100 percent original. The four members of the historic rock 'n' roll band listened to many genres of music, including blues and classical, from which they drew influence for their songs. In fact, all blues songs use the same three basic music chords in their composition. However, if John Lennon were alive today, he would be sick to his stomach to realize that, compared to some of today's pop artists, he was no thief at all.

Music artists today have made a habit out of taking the words and music of songs that were popular in their respective times and using them to make "newer" songs to sell records. The real aggravating part of all of this "copycat" music is the fact that well-known artists are doing it. I would be able to understand if these were new artists trying to get their career started by using a song that is familiar to pop music fans. To have established artists with successful albums out on the market already doing this sampling is pure laziness.

Newer examples of this "robbery of music" come from Nelly's new hit "N Dey Sey;" Eminem's "Like Toy Soldiers;" Britney Spears and her single "My Prerogative" and Gwen Stefani of No Doubt's "Rich Girl." Nelly got his catchy tune from the 1980s group Spandau Ballet and their single "True." If you have seen the movie *The Wedding Singer*, you know this song. With the exception of the rap lyrics, Eminem took a big chunk of his new single from Martika's "Toy Soldiers," another 80s hit. Britney's song is an exact cover of a great Bobby Brown song while Gwen Stefani took the original "Rich Girl" song from the late 90s and slightly altered it to make it her own.

While I do feel sorry for the artists who cannot come up with their own pop music, I feel bad mostly for the younger generation of middle-school and high-school kids that don't know the 80s and 90s music as well. Here are a couple examples of my experiences with a slightly younger crowd.

While at a restaurant with my younger cousin, the song "Jack & Diane" by John Cougar Mellencamp came on over the speakers. My cousin then exclaimed, "I love this Jessica Simpson song! It's awesome!" Of course, she was referring to "I Think I'm in Love."

Next is more of a recent situation. I am the head coach of a high school basketball team and I was driving my players to a game. While listening to a rock station, the classic song "Dream On" by Aerosmith began to play and I turned the volume up. One of my players then said, "This is one of my favorite Eminem songs." Here, he was referring to Eminem's single from a few years back, "Sing for the Moment."

I think my point has been proven and these artists need to quit stealing good songs to make money. In fact, most pop artists don't even write their own music. So would all of you pop artists just be so kind and do me a huge favor: stop being lazy, find a songwriter, pay him/her to write it, record it in a studio, release it... and stop stealing from better musicians!



Ari Bluestein