



APRIL 5, 2009

- HOME
- POLITICS
- MEDIA
- BUSINESS
- ENTERTAINMENT
- LIVING
- STYLE
- GREEN
- WORLD
- CHICAGO
- COMEDY 23/6
- VIDEO
- BLOGGER INDEX
- ARCHIVE
- Twitter: Follow Us
- Get Email Alerts
- Make HuffPost Your HomePage



Michael Giltz

Posted August 16, 2007 | 02:57 PM (EST)

- BIO
- Get Email Alerts Bloggers' Index
- Become a Fan

High School Musical 2: The Biggest Pop Cultural Event in History

Entertainment News



Buzz up! Be the First to Submit This Story to Digg

Get Breaking News Alerts

never spam

Share Print Comments

It's no surprise that the debut of *High School Musical 2* Friday at 8 p.m. has inspired a tidal wave of press coverage. Almost every media outlet in the country was slow in picking up on what a phenomenon *HSM* was becoming and now they need to make up for lost time. But this tween sensation should make that easy: it's almost eerie how many trends in pop culture are reflected in the story of this film. To wit:

Musicals are Back - For 26 years (since MTV launched), virtually every kid in America has grown up watching artists break into song and dance. The idea that they might find a musical odd or off-putting is just crazy. And now everyone has caught on, thanks to the box office success of movies like *Hairspray*, *Chicago*, *Dreamgirls*, *Once* (in its way), *HSM* and a host of others. Further proof: local live theater productions of *HSM* have sprouted around the country.

Kids Love Repetition - Every parent knows that kids like to hear the same story over and over again. But *HSM* took this to unprecedented extremes. Since the movie debuted in January of 2006, the Disney Channel reran it again and again and again, always to millions of viewers - even after it came out on DVD.

Cable TV Overwhelming Major Networks - This summer reached a tipping point, with the major networks churning out uninspired fare (like *Pirate Master*) that reached fewer and fewer viewers and cable channels delivering one audience grabber after another, from *Army Wives* and *Damages* to *Mad Men* and *Flash Gordon*. The major networks would kill to have a TV movie event even remotely as anticipated as Disney's *HSM2*.

A Star is (Almost) Born - Zac Efron, the star of *HSM*, is clearly a breakout talent, thanks to a

NEIL YOUNG
FORK IN THE ROAD
 HIS LATEST ALBUM FEATURES 10 NEW SONGS



AVAILABLE
 APRIL 7

CLICK HERE TO EXPERIENCE THE ALBUM
 NEILYOUNG.COM

Popular Stories on HuffPost

- Fashion Face-Off! Michelle Obama And Carla Bruni-Sarkozy Finally Meet In France (VIDEO, PHOTOS, POLL)
*Video, poll and slideshow
- Levi Johnston Talks Safe Sex With Tyra Banks (VIDEO)
UPDATE 8:30pm: People.com is reporting that Sarah Palin has issued...
- Oscar de la Renta Slams Michelle Obama's Buckingham Outfit As Major Designers Feel Ignored
While Michelle Obama has made lesser...
- Verena von Pfetten 7 Lessons To Be Learned From Carla Bruni
So here's the thing. There's no shortage of articles dedicated to that certain je ne...
- Huff TV Arianna Discusses Michelle Obama's "Fantastic" Style On CBS'

role in the feature film *Hairspray*. He's also done a not-so-good job of being gracious about it: Efron has made some snarky comments about his co-stars and their pop albums and other career decisions, pooh-poohed the concert tour by saying he'd get sick if he had to sing those songs every night and generally giving the impression that he feels like he's already made it, when it's really only *HSM* that deserves that tag.

Digital Music Sales Eclipsing CD Sales - It's a bold new world when the *HSM* soundtrack produced a **record nine singles** on the Billboard Hot 100 -- all at the same time. In short, kids watched the movie debut and then they walked straight over to their computers and downloaded as many digital tunes from it that they could afford. No waiting till the next day to go to a record store and buy the CD for these consumers.

Male Actors Objectified Just like the Gals Are - Squeaky clean Efron is on the cover of *Rolling Stone* magazine lifting up a white t-shirt, showing off his abs and stroking his chest. Yep, male actors now realize they are fair game for eye candy just like women, no matter how young they are.

The American Idol Mania for Competition - Don't forget, *HSM* was all about auditions, about two kids hoping to get cast in the lead roles for their school production. *American Idol* has turned auditions and competition into the defining rite of passage for an entire generation.

Rolling Stone Magazine is as Lost as the Music Industry - Okay, Zac Efron may turn out to be John Travolta for all we know (even though he didn't even sing his own songs in the original). But the cover? Really? He's an appealing, talented kid. But it's hard to think of anything LESS rock and roll than the Disney Channel TV movie *High School Musical* and its sequel. It is the exact opposite of rock and roll.

People Still Love Pop Music- As much as the industry bemoans slowing music sales, the disappearance of record chains across the country, and the lack of a hot new musical force (like the Seattle scene) to get folks excited, the simple truth is that people still spend billions of dollars a year on pop music like *HSM*, the best-selling album of 2006.

TV is the New Radio - Radio stations are so bland and monomaniacal about playing the same formatted batch of tunes whether you're in Miami, Florida or Minneapolis, Minnesota, that they simply don't matter any more. Thank God for TV. No wonder the music supervisor on *Grey's Anatomy* got their own record label -- they've done a better job of spotting and promoting talent like Snow Patrol and The Fray than most A&R folk.

Kids Expect a Multicultural World - Our hero is super-white. His best bud is black. His girlfriend is a sexy mix of Filipino, Chinese, Irish and Native American. And the "bad" girl's brother seems to be a coded gay character. But kids don't blink twice. They expect their movies and TV to look just like their world, where interracial dating and out teenagers are a banal fact of life.

The Atomization of our Culture - *HSM* took so long to gain traction in the Traditional Media because everyone is in a different room in the house, with mom watching Lifetime and dad watching *Ice Road Truckers* on the History Channel and neither of them having a clue that little Suzie is obsessed with *HSM*. With literally something for everyone, can anything bring us together the way, say, *I Love Lucy* did in the 50s and *The Cosby Show* did in the 80s?

Some Events Can Still Bring Us Together - Don't worry. Something for everyone doesn't mean everyone can't gather around the water-cooler every once in a while and talk about the same event. *American Idol* may score lower ratings than *The Cosby Show* but it still pulls in a massive audience. J.K. Rowling had people of all ages lined up at midnight to buy a book. And *HSM2* made enough noise that it won't be just tweens sitting in front of the TV to see *HSM2* this weekend: their parents will be there too to check out what all the fuss is over.

So, did I miss any trends encapsulated by *High School Musical*?

More in Entertainment...

SNL: Madonna And Angelina In

Reality Star Jade Goody Buried In

Robert De Niro Nanny Sues For

Alex Da Silva, Celebrity



"Washington Unplugged"

Arianna was on CBS' "Washington..."

Huff TV Arianna Appears on ABC's "This Week" Roundtable With George Stephanopoulos (VIDEO)

Arianna was a guest this morning on...

"BRUNO" TRAILER! Calamity, African Babies, Chase Scenes And More (NSFW VIDEO)

IT'S HERE! The trailer for this July's Sacha Baron Cohen...

NATO Leaders Focus On Afghanistan, But Most Reject Obama's Plea For Troops (SLIDESHOW)

STRASBOURG, France — On the eve of the NATO...

First Lady Fashion At Friday's NATO Concert (PHOTOS)

Another night, another fashion opportunity for NATO leaders and their spouses! See...

Diana Palin, Sarah Palin's Sister-In-Law, Arrested For Breaking Into Home

ANCHORAGE, Alaska — Police say Alaska Gov....

John Oliver Explains The Real Reason You Never Touch The Queen (VIDEO)

John Oliver was upset enough to drop his monocle when he...

Jim Cramer Declares The Depression "Over" (VIDEO)

On Thursday's episode of "Mad Money" host Jim Cramer declared that the depression...

New Jay Leno Show Rejected By NBC Affiliate In Boston

BOSTON — Boston's NBC affiliate says it will air a local newscast instead of...

Ice Bridge Ruptures In Antarctic (VIDEO)

An ice bridge linking a shelf of ice the size of Jamaica to two islands in Antarctica has

Scientists Find Rocket Fuel Chemical In Infant Formula

ATLANTA — Traces of a

Weekend Update...

Lavish...

\$40,000

Choreographer
Accused Of...

chemical used in rocket
fuel were found in
samples of...

digg™ HuffPost Stories Surging Right Now

Michelle Obama's Clothing
Has Sean Hannity All Out Of
Sorts

Cenk Uygur: Have We
Reached the Tipping Point
on Guns?

RICHARD POPLAWSKI,
Pittsburgh Gunman, Kills 3
Police Officers

Dr. Rachel Ehrenfeld: Does
Iran Harbor Osama bin
Laden?

Ads by Google

Vanessa Hudgens Pics

New Vanessa Hudgens Picture Scandal Full Story
w/ the Celebrity Toolbar

Celebrity.alottoolbars.com

apply online · registration free



Comments for this entry are currently under maintenance but will be restored soon.

Ads by Google

Vanessa Hudgens Pics

New Vanessa Hudgens Picture Scandal Full Story
w/ the Celebrity Toolbar

Celebrity.alottoolbars.com

apply online · registration free



HUFFPOST'S BIG NEWS PAGES

- AIG
- Computers
- India
- Barack Obama
- Michelle Obama
- Sports
- Olympics
- Housing Crisis
- Fox News

[MORE BIG NEWS PAGES](#)

Books by this author

This Blogger's Books from

A cabin of one's own: New England's MacDowell Colony celebrates 100 years of artistic utopia. And the gay and lesbian artists who prospered there celebrate ... (The national gay & lesbian newsmagazine)
by Michael Giltz

Affairs to remember: Farley Granger bedded Ava Gardner, Shelley Winters, and Leonard Bernstein. In his autobiography, Include Me Out, Hitchcock's muse ... (The national gay & lesbian newsmagazine)
by Michael Giltz

Google™ Custom Search

