

Aimee Teegarden Discovers ‘Prom’ Isn’t So Bad

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on April 29, 2011 - 9:36am

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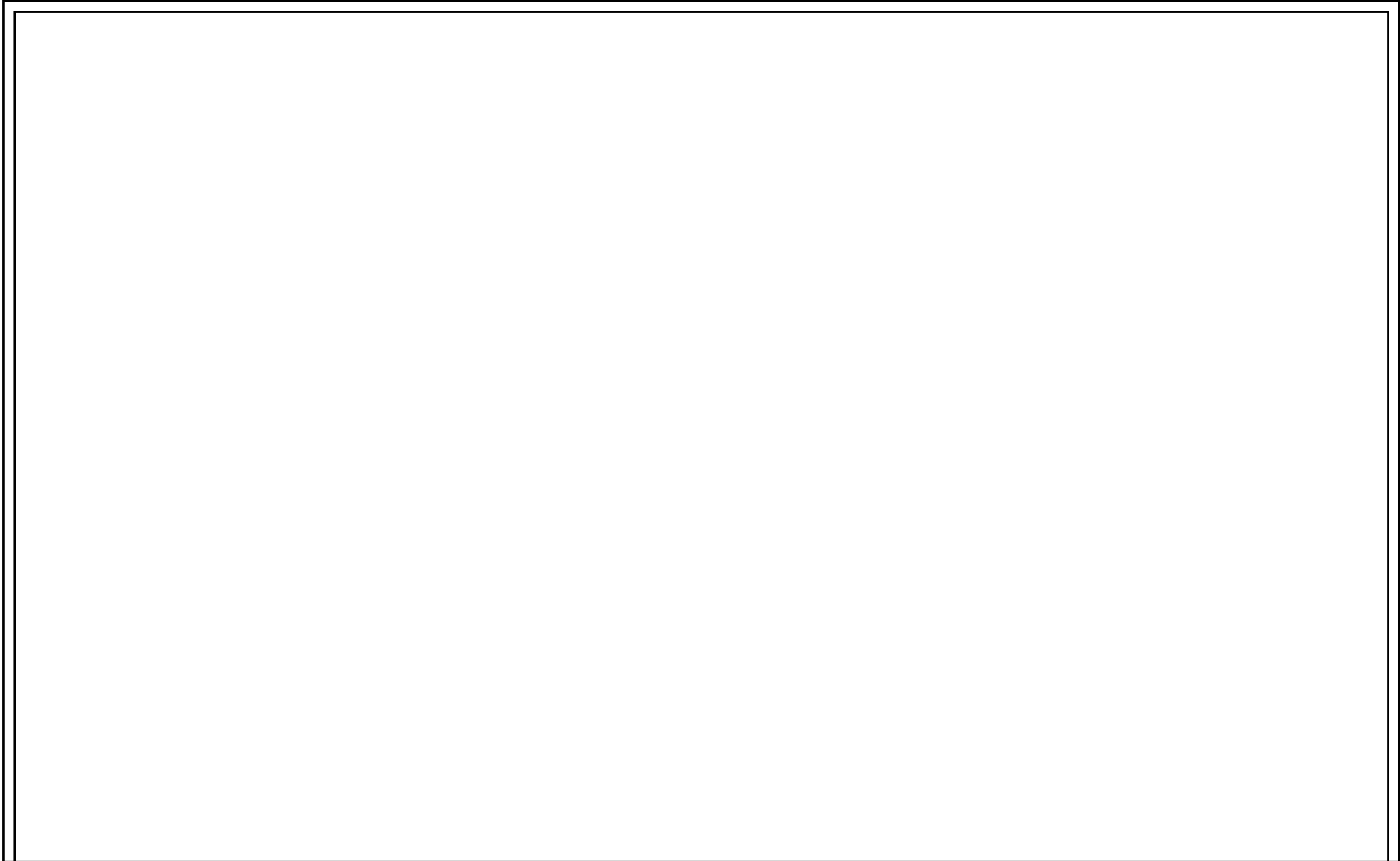


CHICAGO – There are many essential questions in life. What is my purpose? How do I find my place in the universe? Where did I put my mobile phone? But the most important of all, as Aimee Teegarden is about to experience, is who will I get to take me to “Prom.”

Prom, a new film produced by Walt Disney Pictures, is old school. It’s not set in another time, it is set within a former teen movie framework. In the tradition of director John Hughes, Prom portrays high school as a character challenge, with all the highs, lows, heartaches and the strange hope that a transition of life has been achieved.

Nova (Aimee Teegarden) is little Miss Perfect. She’s class president, scholarship student and of course, head of the Prom Committee. Her world is turned upside down when the meticulous decorations for the ‘Starry Night’ theme are destroyed in a school warehouse fire. This collides Nova with Jesse (Thomas McDonell), a moody, motorcycle-riding rebel who is ordered by the school principal to assist on rebuilding the event or risk not graduating. This launches the classic opposites-attract-because-they’re-not-so-opposite discovery.

The rest of the school gets ready for the big night. Mei (Yin Chang) and Justin (Jared Kusnitz) are the long-term couple, destined to be together until they’re not. Tyler (DeVaughn Nixon) and Jordan (Kylie Bunbury) are the popular shoo-ins for King and Queen of the Prom, but Tyler has eyes for the fetching sophomore Simone (Danielle Campbell), which may cause problems. Also a crush on Simone by fellow classmate Lucas (Nolan Sotillo), causes a rift between him and his best friend Corey (Cameron Monaghan). And finally there is Lloyd (Nicholas Braun), the senior who trying to get the courage to ask a girl, any girl to accompany him to Prom.





Prom-crossed Lovers: Thomas McDonnell (Jesse) and Aimee Teegarden (Nova) in ‘Prom’

Photo credit: Richard Foreman, Jr. for © Disney Enterprises

All these forces collide in anticipation of that unforgettable night where the ill-fitting tuxes suddenly seem tailored, the expensive dresses justify their cost and the date that you bring will determine if the Prom lives on as a long or fleeting memory.

There are tributes, counter-homages and archetypal characters in deference to the history of the teen-age movie, especially the John Hughes films of the 1980s. Present in this class are direct nods to “The Wild One,” “Sixteen Candles” and even the more recent jock culture in “Varsity Blues.” Character names like Lucas, Lloyd and Corey also evoke classic teen films, but the screenplay by Katie Wech and direction by Joe Nussbaum also makes sure the atmosphere has an air of real adolescent dilemma.

It was surprising to note that the two main characters, Nova and Jesse, are part of obvious working class families. Usually in films like this the high schoolers are effortlessly wealthy or at least in the upper middle registry, so it was refreshing to see an auto mechanic Dad and a waitress Mom. The struggle to uplift from those circumstances are not ignored either, as the Dad is not happy with Nova’s potential coupling with Jesse, prejudging the situation by assuming that the motorcycle kid might compromise his scholarship daughter’s future.

Having said those positive things, the film does have fantastic absurdities. All the main roles in this high school, even the strategically placed “losers,” are portrayed by clear skinned male and female beauties. Serious good looks abound, and examples of a large hair styling budget are prevalent in the Simone, Jordan, Nova and Jesse characters. Even the Sophomore boys had fabulously coiffed hairdos. Maybe the school includes an overachieving Vidal Sassoon Club.

Trying to maintain the John Hughes level in the writing was difficult as well (which just calls out his genius once again). Some of the gags were sharp, including a take-off on Brangelina, but many of the jokes were lead balloons. There is a comic relief character named Rolo (Joe Adler), overdoing the outsider weirdness, whose running bit involves his potential prom date from Canada. The payoff is predictable.



Beautiful Music: Nolan Sotillo (Lucas) and Danielle Campbell (Simone) in ‘Prom’
Photo credit: Richard Foreman, Jr. for © Disney Enterprises

These are minor complaints in what ends up as a reliable teen soap opera. The break ups, come together, rejections, fulfillments, the awkward and the fabulous all gather around the cool fire of the Prom narrative with ease, producing anticipated results in both romantic and original ways. Given the consumerism on display and adult-like behavior in recent teen moves, Prom succeeds just by being a bit innocent and yes, old school.

This film is really about what becomes important at a certain point in life, where all emotions and disappointments produce a strong palpable ache, which can only be relieved by getting to the last dance, last chance for love.

“Prom” opens everywhere on April 29th. Featuring Aimee Teegarden, Thomas McDonell, DeV Vaughn Nixon, Danielle Campbell, Yin Chang, Jared Kusnitz, Nicholas Braun and Faith Ford. Screenplay by Kate Wech, directed by Joe Nussbaum. Rated “PG”



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