Girls harmonize to good effect in ‘Pitch Perfect'

Contributed by KIMBERLY GRANT
Thursday, 04 October 2012
Last Updated Sunday, 07 October 2012

Along comes a film that pays homage to those songs of earlier years and even today; songs with meaning and a really great hook.

Enter Pitch Perfect, a story about Aubrey (Anna Camp) and Chloe (Brittany Snow), who are looking for eight girls with bikini-ready bodies who can sing for their flailing all-girl a cappella group, The Barden Belles.

What they find are Beca (Anna Kendrick), self-nicknamed Fat Amy (Rebel Wilson), Stacie (Alexis Knapp), Cynthia Rose (Ester Dean), Lilly (Hana Mae Lee) and a few other misfits. The Belles spend a school semester training to fight their college’s all-guy a cappella group, the Treble Makers, in an international competition.

Director Jason Moore, who’s most notable as the Tony winning director of Avenue Q on Broadway, pokes fun at FOX’s Glee by saying that it is just high school stuff and a cappella is the real deal. Someone who has never watched a full episode of Glee might assume that if Pitch Perfect is paying homage to Glee, it’s doing a great job.

POPING DIALOGUE

Screenwriter Kay Cannon, adapting Elle columnist Mickey Rapkin’s novel of the same name, makes her dialogue pop within a formula in which a girl group, made up of quirky underdogs, triumphs against a testosterone fueled guy group — a beautiful thing. As the Treble Makers’ horn dog leader, Bumper (Adam DeVine) puts it: “Sisters before misters.”

It should also be noted that Cannon, who has penned episodes of NBC’s 30 Rock, brings fresh writing and really taps into the sisterhood spirit. Even though these ladies fight, they stick together, which is more than one can say about other female-centric films (that means you, Something Borrowed). This is obviously a female centric film. Speaking for women audience members, we don’t like our chick flicks with a side of throw-up.

KILLER PIPES

Wilson, Camp, Kendrick and Snow have such beautiful voices that one can get goosebumps hearing Beca and Chloe singing in the communal shower. Yes: Chloe accosts Beca in the shower and makes her harmonize with her to a spectacular rendition of David Guetta’ Titanium.

Wilson’s Fat Amy steals this film. Kendrick, who is the pseudo-star of this girl group, dabbles in a halfhearted alternative gothic look that doesn’t really match her wardrobe — but that can be forgiven because of her developing acting chops and

killer pipes.

Deserving of special mention are Elizabeth Banks and John Michael Higgins as competition commentators Gail and John, respectively. Their interplay is the stuff that many commentators wouldn't dare say on live television, which makes their banter all the more delicious. Honorable mention goes to costume designer Salvador Perez Jr., who puts winter wear together like every piece makes more of an ensemble than an outfit.

SISTERHOOD

Pitch Perfect is a sweet and sour romp in female antics that may make some ladies wish they could do college life all over again — minus the crazy cramming and constant worry about getting good grades. There are no catfights over boys. No overt raunchiness. It's just a group of girls harmonizing to good effect and exploring the real meaning of sisterhood.