‘The Matrix’ Meets Grrrl Power
‘Charlie’s Angels’ Entertains Despite Mindless Direction

BY TIM O’COIN
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If I were to describe “Charlie’s Angels” in only one word, it would be “unnecessary.” It’s a frenetic, ridiculous, totally unbelievable, and monstrously over-the-top feature that revels in its ability to outdo itself in increasingly preposterous action sequences and comic interludes needlessly blown way out of proportion. But let’s get something straight here, if a person goes into a movie like “Charlie’s Angels” expecting anything else, they obviously need to have their head examined. Not once does this movie come within a country mile of anything resembling a plot or character development. Then again, we must remember this is a film based on a television show that, by all accounts (I myself have never scene Aaron Spelling’s small screen original), is as equally vacuous and absurd; the movie just relies more on big-screen technical wizardry and a big-screen budget. Yet, despite the flood-level of nonsense, “Charlie’s Angels” works as pure entertainment simply for the reason the movie never takes itself seriously, and flat-out tells the audience to do the same. This flick is all about wacky ballistic fun, and honestly, what else is to be expected from a film starring Cameron Diaz, Lucy Liu, and Drew Barrymore as three sleuths who dress up, tease, tickle, and kick ass?

The plot is about as paper-thin as one would expect from a movie like this one. Natalie (Diaz), Alex (Liu), and Dylan (Barrymore) work under the anonymous Charlie (voice of John Forsythe, who was also Charlie in the TV show) as detectives / crime fighters-for-hire. Along for the ride is Bosley (played here by Bill Murray), Charlie’s right-hand man. Their latest assignment: investigate the kidnapping of millionaire software wiz-kid Eric Knox (Sam Rockwell). All fingers point to rival communications magnate Roger Corwin (Tim Curry) for the abduction, apparently to pilfer Knox’s revolutionary new voice-recognition software and use it to track anyone with a cell phone.

Screenwriters Ryan Rowe, Ed Solomon, and John August attempt to give the story a miniscule amount of depth, throwing in a few plot twists which ultimately lead to a scheme to do away with Charlie himself. However, the plot is of little consequence beyond stringing together the movie’s action sequences, fight scenes, and comedic pieces. Director McG, who graduated from music videos and commercials with this feature, acts much like a kid used to drawing with crayons suddenly being given total control of…well, Hollywood’s crayons. Director McG may direct like a hyperactive ten-year-old in dire need of Ritalin, but surprise, surprise, “Charlie’s Angels” is a fun ride nevertheless. The stunts, while far from original, still pack plenty of punch. The combination of these action scenes and the movie’s kinetic sense of enjoyment coaxes the viewer into simply kicking back and enjoying the insanity playing out on screen.

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As is to be expected, all other cast members play second fiddle to the girl-power trio. Rockwell and Glover do a decent job of stealing a bit of the ladies’ thunder, but all other performances here are sadly forgettable. Even Bill Murray, a name synonymous with comic abandon, sounds bored and tired as Bosley.

There you have it; “Charlie’s Angels” is pure fluff, but it’s definitely pure fun. Film enthusiasts who may feel bad about enjoying this brainless, guilty pleasure of a movie can take comfort in the fact that we’re barreling headlong into Oscar territory, meaning they’ll be plenty of heady stuff finding its way into theaters very soon.

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