

Fishburne biker flick stuck in neutral

By Kam Williams

Special to Sentinel-Voice

Just a month ago, Derek Luke received critical acclaim for his stirring performance as Antwone Fisher in the title role of Denzel Washington's directorial debut. In that emotional melodrama, he played an orphaned young man who excises his demons by returning to his roots to learn about the dad he never got a chance to know.

Already, the emerging young star is back with another absentee father-troubled son storyline in what is only his second screen credit. Talk about typecasting!

Though Biker Boyz is more of an action than chick flick, what it passes off as a plot revolves around the fallout of Luke's character, Kid, growing up without his real father.

That deadbeat dad, Smoke, played by Fishburne, is the undisputed King of Cali, a moniker for the fastest man in California on two wheels. For Smoke is the legendary leader of a black biker gang that seems to get off on staging illegal drag races against other motorcycle clubs.

When not competing, these bike enthusiasts revel in performing eye-popping stunts such as standing on a speeding motorcycle's seat or dragging both feet on the ground behind a bike flying at breakneck speed. Every



Larry Fishburne, center, and Salli Richardson, left, lead a talented cast in "Biker Boys."

gang's got girls, too, so another popular activity is anything involving women, water and their rides, like a bikini bike wash.

Kid, our hero, only learns that he's Smoke's son after his long-devoted step-dad is run over by, you guessed it, a motorcycle. What still prevents bio-father and son from bonding is the fact that Kid is an emerging biker with a competing club.

Worse, he's after the coveted title currently held by his father. So, this is one of those movies which culminates in a big showdown, the twist being that the competition is between a boy who wants to prove he's grown up and a man who refuses to.

Forget the trite, transpar-

ent plot, the real reason to see Biker Boyz is for the screaming, macho machines. Reminiscent of such recent testosterone-soaked, vehicle vehicles as *Gone in 60 Seconds* (2000) or *The Fast and the Furious* (2001), the movie is essentially an extended motorcycle showcase.

Though an all-star cast was assembled by actor-turned-director Reggie Rock Bythewood, you wonder why he even bothered, since it's all about the bikes.

Squandered services include those of Orlando Jones (*Drumline*), Terrence Howard (*The Best Man*), Djimon Hounsou (*The Four Feathers*), Lisa Bonet (of TV's *The Cosby Show*), rocker Kid Rock (*Joe Dirt*),

supermodel Tyson Beckford (*Zoolander*), Kadeem Hardison (of TV's *A Different World*), Larenz Tate (*Love Jones*) and Salli Richardson (Antwone Fisher).

The only characters we care about are those of Fishburne and Luke, and it's a little weird to watch them work out their issues while burning rubber at 100+ mph.

Zoom-zoom!

Fair (1.5 stars). Rated PG-13 for profanity, violence and some sex content.

Cedric the Entertainer to host Image Awards

LOS ANGELES (AP) - The NAACP chose Cedric the Entertainer to host its upcoming Image Awards show despite his jokes in the film "Barbershop" that angered some black leaders.

His character made mocking remarks in the film about civil rights icons the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and Rosa Parks, sparking complaints upon its release in September from the Revs. Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton.

Kweisi Mfume, president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, said the uproar was "overblown." He noted that other characters in the film shouted down the remarks that Cedric's character made. Mfume said Thursday he hoped choosing the comedian as host would help put the controversy to rest.

"Some people, and it's their right, will object and say it's not the right choice, but thank God this is America, where people can do that," he said. "We're not a monolithic community, African-Americans - never have been and never will be."

"Barbershop," about friendships forged at a hair salon in a black neighborhood of Chicago, has five Image Award nominations, including best picture and best supporting actor for Cedric. The film, now available on DVD and home video, was a box-office hit that collected more than \$75 million domestically.

Cedric has had four consecutive Image Awards - presented by the NAACP to people of color for their work in literature, television, film and music - for comedic supporting TV actor for "The Steve Harvey Show." He also stars in his own Fox variety show, "Cedric the Entertainer Presents."

Show-business professionals and NAACP officials from across the country choose the Image Award winners. The 34th annual ceremony is set for March 8 at the Universal Amphitheater, and Fox will broadcast a tape of the program on March 13.

Caesar

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CD, *You Can Make It*. She kept the tempo of the concert up, looking back at her band, saying, "Let's take this up," and the spirit flew through the room and we all climbed on board.

"This is a brand new you. You'd better get your praise on, this is the day the Lord made."

Caesar has performed for former President Clinton and appeared before the world on shows such as ABC's *Good Morning America*, VH1, *The Tonight Show* and many more, and her performance was no less for us.

It was as if she were marching and dancing for all our troubles.

When I looked over again,

and that young man — who, by the way, is Davion Gray — had moved to the aisles and was dancing for us all, I realized just how important Pastor Shirley Caesar was, but even more so, how important C-Me Productions and Churchesinlasvegas.com were to us.

Let us be good to them; they are right here with us.



Clinton House, (left) suffragan bishop of Mountaintop Faith Ministries, and City Council members Lynette Boggs McDonald and Larry Weekly enjoyed the gospel concert.

Sentinel-Voice photo by Dianna Saffold