

Beyonce, Martin fail to find groove in Panther

By Kam Williams
Sentinel-Voice

"The Pink Panther" (1963) introduced Peter Sellers as the bumbling, French detective Jacques Clouseau in an endearing enough performance to give rise to a beloved film franchise which would ultimately include five, zany crime capers. In the original, the hapless gumshoe was out to recover a diamond stolen by a playboy who not only had pilfered the priceless jewel but who was also carrying on an affair with clueless Clouseau's wife right under his nose.

Sadly, the series slowly faded into oblivion as each ensuing installment relied more on silly slapstick and less on the sublime sort of humor which had made the first so memorable. And regrettably, this revival of "The Pink Panther" is more akin to the later episodes than to the earlier material.

Directed by Shawn Levy, the movie features a talented cast which includes Steve Martin as Clouseau; Emily Mortimer as Nicole, his shy secretary; Kevin Kline as Chief Dreyfus, his conniving boss; Jean Reno as Ponton, his partner; and Beyonce as the fetching, femme fatale, typecast as Xania, an international pop star.



Legendary comic Steve Martin (M) and Grammy winner Beyonce star in "Pink Panther."

Marley's house now historic

KINGSTON, Jamaica (AP) - The house where Bob Marley once lived has been designated a protected national heritage site by the Jamaican government.

An official ceremony to mark the designation took place Tuesday at the home, now a museum that showcases the recording studio Marley built as well as memorabilia that once belonged to the reggae superstar.

"This ensures that for future generations nothing will be changed without the consent of the National Heritage Trust. It will always look as it did when Bob was here," Jacqueline Lynch-Stewart, manager at the museum, said Wednesday.

A plaque marking the occasion was unveiled by Marley's daughter Stephanie and government officials. It bears the words,

"One good thing about music, when it hits you feel no pain," taken from the singer's hit song "Trenchtown Rock."

Marley, who died in 1981 at age 36, is widely credited with introducing reggae music to an international audience in the 1970s. He was born in rural St. Ann parish, but spent much of his formative years in the Kingston ghetto of Trench Town. He moved to the upscale house once owned by Island Records founder Chris Blackwell in the early 1970s.

Marley rarely lived in the wooden house after he was shot there during rehearsals for a concert in December 1976.

Lynch-Stewart says 20,000 people annually visit the museum, which opened in May 1986.

The film opens at a soccer match where Xania's boyfriend, Team France's soccer coach Yves Gluant (Jason Statham) is felled on the field by a poisoned dart during the celebration of its victory over China. Just as mysterious as his murder is the disappearance of his ring which was fitted with the famed Pink Panther.

Chief Dreyfus, in line for the prestigious Medal of Honor, assigns the case to Clouseau, fully expecting him to fail. It certainly seems like the right choice, since the goofy gendarme can't park a car, take Viagra or attach electrodes to a suspect's gonads without it ending up as a gag.

Suspects abound, starting with Xania, who we learn had been two-timing her

beau with Bizu (William Abadie), one of his players.

Who's a murderer. Could it be Bizu? Then there's Raymond LaBarge (Roger Rees), the sleazy casino owner; Yuri (Henry Czerny), the Russian soccer trainer; and Cherie (Kristin Chenoweth), a flirtatious publicist.

Sadly, Clouseau, ever the clown, proceeds to solve this mystery without a whit of subtlety, and therein lies the fatal flaw of this tired retread. The movie induces nary a laugh, only groans of disbelief that we're expected to find such a sorry string of dumb puns, infantile farts, awful accents and endless pratfalls funny.

Fair (1 star). Rated PG for crude humor and suggestive language.

Wu-Tang

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"He'll be in our hearts, and he'll be in the hearts of the crowd. It'll be great. It'll be a great tribute," GZA said.

Though it's been more than a decade since "Enter the Wu-Tang" debuted with its references to kung-fu movies and Chinese folklore, GZA said the group's energy hasn't waned.

Wu-Tang is working on a new album and a documentary using film collected on tours and during time spent living in a California mansion, GZA said.

"It's just Wu-Tang, raw and uncut — the most intimate moments," GZA said.

Despite internal feuds over the past 13 years, GZA said the group dynamic hasn't changed. "It feels good to come together," he said. "It feels good to be around my brothers, regardless of whatever we go through."

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