

SOCIAL INTERCOURSE

Rattpoison

1-2 February at 10pm
Jet Nightclub and Sports Lounge

If you're jonesin' for a good power-ballad and there's no decade-themed party in sight, fear not: hot off of their ground-breaking New Year's gig at the Jet Nightclub and Sports Lounge, Rattpoison's playing a two-night stint to remind us of the best parts of the '80s: men in spandex, gigantic hair, and, if you're lucky, era classics like "Final Countdown" and "The Kid is Hot Tonight."

Of course, if you can't make it out to either night this weekend, fret not; you can catch the band again next month at the same place or, barring that, in April—just like Facebook photos of your most drunken Journey sing-alongs, these guys aren't going anywhere.

Frankenstein

Thursday-Sunday, 2-24 February at 8pm
Adapted and Directed by Jonathan Christenson
Starring Nick Green, Andrew Kushnir, and Sarah Machin-Gale
Catalyst Theatre (8529 Gateway Boulevard)

After a monstrous reception last year, Catalyst Theatre's touring *Frankenstein* has added a victory lap to its itinerary after covering most of the country in 2007 and is once more set to rampage through town.

Having adapted Mary Shelly's original book, this production offers bizarre, dream-like costumes, poetic lines, and (hopefully) a flash mob of angry, pitchfork wielding townsfolk chasing the misunderstood monster out of town to protect their daughters from his reanimated clutches.

Frankenstein ultimately reminds us of the perils of creating artificial life via the hack-n-slash-n-patch method. Cloning's totally the way to go, as angry mobs rarely form against people who appear to be identical genetic copies of themselves.



HMS Pinafore

Runs 2, 5, and 7 February at 8pm
Directed by Rob Herriot
Starring Gregory Dahl, Colin Ainsworth, and Jeff Haslam
Jubilee Auditorium

Edmonton Opera's managed to get famed Edmonton playwright Stewart Lemoine to revamp Gilbert and Sullivan's classic story of two young lovers separated by the class system: he's a naval captain and she's just a sailor, but zany hijinx might just bring these two together.

Though its original run was critically panned, the show eventually managed to transform into a smash hit after Gilbert and Sullivan used some of its music during a regular concert. Indeed, who could resist such operatic staples as "I'm Called Little Buttercup" or a cast that includes characters like Dick Deadeye and Josephine, the captain's daughter?

PAUL BLINOV
Missing Kmech so very much



Entering a Strange Wilderness

Steve Zahn chats about sacrificing plot for funny and losing roles to the likes of Matt Damon

musicpreview

Strange Wilderness

Opens Friday, 1 February
Directed by Fred Wolf
Starring Steve Zahn, Allen Covert, and Ernest Borgnine

PAUL BLINOV
Arts & Entertainment Editor

Quick: how do you remember Steve Zahn (if you do at all)? Is it as the moustache-sporting Wayne from *Saving Silverman*, or as the shockingly thin Duane Martin from last year's *Rescue Dawn*?

Zahn's managed to make a career for himself ping-ponging between sidekick roles in both serious and silly movies for years, but his upcoming comedy *Strange Wilderness* marks something rare for a guy who's often stuck as the protagonist's friend: the ever-elusive leading role.

"I had just shot *Rescue Dawn* in Thailand, and I took this trip to Vietnam right after I wrapped [up]," Zahn explains over a crackling phone. "I [then] did this kayaking trip up in Ha Long Bay, which is up near China, and my agent's trying to get a hold of me while I was kayaking. But of course, I didn't have cell reception. I get back to Hanoi, and he calls me and says, 'Hey, you got this offer on this script, and it's crazy, and we think you'd really like it. But you need to tell them like within the next like 12 hours.'

"And so I was in my room at the Hanoi Hilton, and I read this script," he continues. "I laughed so hard when I read it, [but] then I thought,

'Man, am I just laughing because I just did *Rescue Dawn* and now I'm in Hanoi? I'm sitting there in my hotel in my underwear and [is] that why it's funny, or is it really that funny?' So I read it again, and I laughed even harder."

"The intent of this movie is to be as funny as possible at all times, even if that means the story needs to not make sense. And that's why I thought it was so funny, and that's why I did it."

STEVE ZAHN
STRANGE WILDERNESS STAR

In *Strange Wilderness*, Zahn plays the host of a late-night wilderness show on the verge of cancellation—the network's producer finally caught an episode, and is mortified by the content. Desperate to keep his show on air, Zahn takes his crew on a hail-mary hunt for the one animal that could save it: Bigfoot.

"It was one of the only comedies that I read that was truly funny, that had great characters in it, that was interesting, and at the same time, didn't feel like it had to follow some kind of, you know, generic rule of story format," Zahn explains. "Even in the crazy comedy, the guy falls in love with the girl, or the friend is really bummed out. [There are] those one or two scenes where it's serious all of a sudden, [but] the intent of this movie is to be as funny as possible at all times, even if that means

the story needs to not make sense. And that's why I thought it was so funny, and that's why I did it."

Strange Wilderness marks one of Zahn's first leading roles; in the past, he's had an unfortunate history of getting passed up in favour of bigger, more established names. But if there's one thing to be said for Zahn, it's that he's been consistently popping up in movies for years, even if he's not the big name.

"I remember I was up for *Courage Under Fire*. It was between me and Matt Damon, and I was like 'Who is Matt Damon?' And I'm sure Matt Damon was like 'Who is Steve Zahn?' And we sat for like a month, and finally he got [the part]," he says. "That really bummed me out, you know. And so, in hindsight, I go, 'Wow, maybe my career would have been a little different if I would've got this or that.' But in general, just having longevity is, like, such a hard thing to attain. And that's what I really concentrate on."

He's done a pretty good job—*Strange Wilderness* marks one of five movies he's involved in this year—and critics haven't failed to notice, either. For his role as the heroin-addicted husband of Drew Barrymore in *Riding in Cars with Boys*, critics as large as Roger Ebert suggested that Zahn deserved an Oscar nomination for his role, and he drummed up further acclaim after losing 40 pounds for his role in *Rescue Dawn*. But that doesn't mean he's going to abandon the comedy route in favour of strictly serious acting: scripts like *Strange Wilderness* still hold a special, irrelevant place in his heart.

"There's absolutely no moral, and there's absolutely no lesson in this movie," he laughs. "That's one of the reasons I did it."