

Arts & Entertainment

Vic's Picks

Gracie Soundtrack - Ride Down Memory Lane

By VICTORIA McCABE
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

The meaningful movie soundtrack is a rare art form. Some movies beg for inextricably significant albums - will "Afternoon Delight" ever be the same after *Anchorman*? Would *13 Going on 30* be as forgivable a guilty pleasure without its use of "Love is a Battlefield" as a profound source of wisdom?

Arguably, no. Then again, can anyone name the moment that Dashboard Confessional breaks into *Spiderman*? Do fans of *The Rundown* care about its soundtrack? Does anyone even know what's on that soundtrack?

Sometimes the songs that complement a film are everything; in other cases, they weave unassumingly into the fabric of a movie, subtly reinforcing the mood of a scene or establishing a time and place.

For *Gracie*, the soundtrack question isn't cut and dry. In a sports film, there are always plenty of action sequences just waiting for audio accompaniment. But the song that underscores the movie's most provocative montages - Bruce Springsteen's "Growing Up" - isn't on the soundtrack. It's no surprise, and it's through no fault of the album's orchestrators - soundtracks are all about licensing, and the Boss is obviously a tough acquisition. Even so, it's too bad that the song that most defines

the determined teen isn't present. The *Gracie* soundtrack plays like a classic turn-of-the-decade mixtape heralding in the 80s. Much like the movie's vintage home décor and old-school Mets memorabilia (check out Gracie's bedroom!), the album is about transporting the audience back to 1978, and in that, it scores.

Edgar Winters' "Free Ride" never disappoints, and in the context of *Gracie*, it's a great inclusion - the film's main character just might take a "free ride" of her own down to the Jersey Shore, courtesy of her dad's car. No one can argue with Blondie, and "Hanging on the Telephone" joins the ubiquitous "Heart of Glass" to round out a pair of contributions from the 70s and 80s icons.

Boston's "Don't Look Back" is a motivator kicking off the soundtrack, and The James Gang's ever-popular "Funk #49," last seen on *The Devil's Rejects* soundtrack, also makes an appearance. "The Tonight Show" theme and introduction from Doc Severinsen and The Tonight Show Orchestra ups the nostalgia factor.

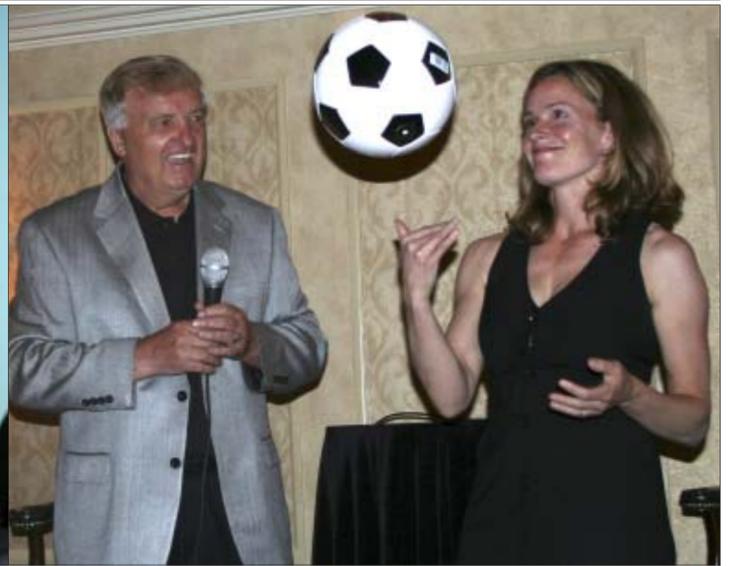
Is the *Gracie* soundtrack required listening? No. But this isn't *Garden State*, and we're not looking for a "New Slang." These songs capture the best of a time period perfectly, and for that, the album is an enjoyable ride.



MOVIE (STAR) PREVIEW...Gracie star Carly Schroeder listens as Andrew Shue introduces the movie to a packed audience at the Maplewood Theater last Tuesday.



LUCKY NUMBER SEVEN...Left, Gracie star Carly Schroeder autographs movie posters on the walls of the Maplewood Theater at the movie's special premiere last Tuesday. The #7 jersey her character shares with her brother is the same number that all the Shue siblings shared in real life. PUT ME IN COACH...Right, longtime Columbia High School soccer coach Gene Chyzowych smiles after Elisabeth Shue takes the soccer ball handoff from her brother. See more photos at galeader.com/photos.



Gracie Comes Home: Movie Filmed Partially In Westfield Premieres at Maplewood Theater

By CHRISTIE STORMS
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

MAPLEWOOD —When most of us think about coming home, it's often less about the architectural structure itself and more about the people who will welcome us and the sentiment we'll feel when we get there. Apparently, it's no different when you're a movie star...well, except for the throngs of people lining the street, snapping photos and requesting autographs the moment you arrive at your old local movie theater.

Just ask actors and siblings Elisabeth and Andrew Shue. The New Jersey natives were visibly emotional as they entered the Maplewood Theater last week for the premiere of *Gracie*, their inspirational movie based on Elisabeth's perseverance in fulfilling her dream of playing competitive soccer as a youth and the family's struggle to cope with the tragic loss of her brother William.

Maybe it was the cheerful welcome from members of the local girls' soccer teams, dressed in red uniforms inscribed with the word "Gracie" and William's soccer jersey number "7," which Columbia High School (CHS) retired in his honor.

Maybe it was the fact that when Elisabeth was growing up, no such girls' teams existed, but this premiere fundraiser the Shues organized raised more than \$100,000 to benefit both male and female athletes with the renovation of CHS athletic facilities.

Or maybe it was having their former soccer coach, Gene Chyzowych, attend the premiere, and the other familiar faces they saw when they stepped onto the green carpet (an Astroturf style befitting their sports movie) that was rolled out in their honor.

"This is the highlight," producer and co-star Andrew Shue told *The Westfield Leader* and *The Times*. "To come home and be able to celebrate our youth in a film, and then to have so many people here, just to see all these faces...it's very meaningful."

Before the movie began, the cast signed posters displayed throughout the theater lobby, pausing along the way for autographs and photos.

After everyone was seated, Andrew addressed the crowded theater. He grew wistful discussing movies he'd seen there as a child and described *Gracie* as "the most expensive home movie ever made."

The entire production was filmed in various locations throughout New Jersey, including Maplewood and Westfield, where a residence stands in for the Shues' former home in South Orange. Filming on Lawrence

Avenue took place last fall.

At the reception held at the Maplewood Country Club following the premiere, Andrew reiterated to *The Leader/Times* how important it was to find the right colonial with a "vintage" feel right down to the "creaking stairways."

"You know what's amazing?" he asked. "A lot of people here have been in our real house, and they were like, 'That was your real house! That looks just like your real house.' And I was like, 'no, no...that was in Westfield.'"

"There are a lot of people here that I went to high school with, a teacher that came out and a lot of my sister's friends and people I haven't seen in a long time," he said. "Maybe I'm a romantic, but my past is just so important to me in who I am and where I want to go in life."

Nostalgic displays of trophies, yearbooks, newspaper clippings and sports memorabilia (including the aforementioned retired soccer jersey) allowed party guests to peek further into the private lives of the Shue family.

Academy Award nominated actress Elisabeth Shue, who portrays Gracie's mom in the film and is a co-producer, spoke with *The Leader/Times* about her initial reaction to having her family's stories revealed on the silver screen.

"I was a bit reluctant at first because it's obviously something so personal," she said. "But - since my husband, Davis, was going to be the director - I felt very confident he would protect the story. And he did such a good job."

This was not a responsibility Davis Guggenheim, who recently won an Academy Award for *An Inconvenient Truth*, took lightly.

"I think the hardest thing was feeling like I had to get my wife's story right," Guggenheim told *The Leader/Times*. "This is a real family and a real town. And if you're not careful, a film can sort of cheapen things. It's about their brother, who passed away. I had to make sure we dealt with the stories in a sensitive way."

Guggenheim was also faced with the challenge of mixing key emotional moments with fast-paced, action-packed soccer scenes.

"My favorite part is when my wife



FAMILY PRIDE...Above, Elisabeth Shue raises the arm of her mother, Anne Harms, as Andrew Shue speaks about the strength and courage the siblings have seen in their mother. SHUE-GAZING...Below, Leader/Times reporter Christie Storms and Andrew discuss Gracie's significance to the Shue family.



helps as a mother telling her daughter not to give up," he said. "There's a special magic, a special meaning in that scene, because when do we get to be our own parent and go back to put ourselves on the right path?...It's what she wished her mother could've done for her when she was that age...It's kind of therapeutic."

Guggenheim said he would like to work with his family again, but only for another "special story like this one."

He joked about famous film producer Samuel Goldwyn's thoughts on the subject.

"He had that 'Theory of Relativity,' which was - never work with your relatives," Guggenheim said. "But, really, this movie was born out of a love for her brother

and her family and her. And if I could find that...as a filmmaker, that's exciting. But I wouldn't just go off and make a lacrosse movie now."

All four of the Shue siblings have been accomplished athletes. But this wasn't a trait originally shared by actress Carly Schroeder, who rarely played the game before competing against thousands of other hopefuls



BALLIN'...Carly Schroeder and Elisabeth Shue pose with Columbia High School soccer players at the Maplewood Theater.



HOME COMING...Elisabeth Shue arrives at the Gracie premiere at the Maplewood Theater.



SCENES FROM THE GREEN CARPET...The Maplewood Theater rolled out the green (astroturf) carpet for a special premiere of *Gracie* last Tuesday evening. Stars Andrew and Elisabeth Shue returned to their home theater for the event, along with Gracie star Carly Schroeder and director Davis Guggenheim. From left: theater workers wear Gracie's #7; Andrew, Carly, Elisabeth and Davis pose outside of the theater; young fans plan to seek autographs from the movie stars and director; Andrew and Elisabeth smile for cameras.

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