

## OPINION

**Viewpoint: 10 years later, life lessons from 'School of Rock'***By Jordan Gass-Poore' September 9, 2013 4:01 pm*

Courtesy Paramount Pictures

**Jack Black on *The School of Rock*, 10 years later: "I think it has something to do with trying to do what you enjoy...I think the lesson is play rock with passion."**

A good part of my day is spent getting schooled, be it by my professors, mother or smart-aleck roommate. So spending another two hours of my life watching the musical development of a group of youngsters on the big screen during last month's *The School of Rock 10-year reunion at The Paramount Theatre in Austin, Texas* may not have been the wisest decision on my part, especially because I skipped class (is it still considered skipping when you notify your professors ahead of time?), but it was definitely more fun.

Some of *The School of Rock* cast members had similar college woes, like Aleisha Allen, who said she recently graduated from Pace University. Allen played Alicia, one of the band's backup singers. Despite a degree in speech pathology and an education minor, the New York native said her musical aspirations haven't waned.

I'm in a similar boat, as my childhood dream to become the next Stephen King (yes, I aim high) has yet to really take off. I was inspired to major in English at Texas State by my high school teacher Mr. Simpson, who bears similar physical and mental characteristics to *School of Rock* star Jack Black and his character in the film, *Dewey Finn*.

Black himself played a subconscious role in my educational development too.

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If memory serves, it was in 2003, right around the time *The School of Rock* premiered, that some of my friends and I took a "celebrity soulmate" quiz. My friends were all matched with then-celebrity heartthrobs, but I was told that my soul had a deeper connection with Black because of his humorous disposition.

But the movie wasn't created to help me realize what I want in a man. The film's lessons have far more substance.

That is if the cast can remember them.

"I don't remember," said Black jokingly (I think), as he looked to the film's director, Austinite Richard Linklater, for help. "I don't even remember what this movie's about. How do you remember the lessons? I think it has something to do with trying to do what you enjoy ... I think the lesson is play rock with passion."

Linklater, after complementing Black on his performance in the film, added that *The School of Rock* is about passion and process, and that "math and English is like, totally useless, but music is great."

"(In the film) kids are getting an early taste of what adulthood could be, where they follow what they're most passionate about," said Linklater. "(Black's) character is giving them an early taste of the freedom of that."

After debating on whether or not *The School of Rock* has any life lessons, besides the actual music lessons that Black's character leads the elementary prepschoolers on film, he and Linklater came to a conclusion.

They hope there isn't a lesson in the film. So punk rock of them.

Maryam Hassan, who played the band's lead singer, Tomika, had a more serious response to the film's questionable life lessons.

"Being yourself, accepting who you are and just going for it — being confident," said Hassan, who spent a year studying fashion at The Art Institute of Atlanta and continues to sing.

Fellow New Yorker Brian Falduto, who played Billy, the band's no-fuss fashion designer ("You're tacky and I hate you!"), is attending Wagner College as a performance theater major. Wagner College's Main Hall was used as the film's fictitious Horace Green Elementary.

Falduto's takeaway from the film: "Teamwork. We're all such different characters and we work together and it's a great finished product."

Former Nickelodeon *iCarly* star Mirando Cosgrove, who played the band manager Summer, said the reunion was the first time she's seen the majority of the film's cast, besides Black and bassist Rebecca Brown, in a decade.

*The School of Rock* serves as a time capsule for many of the film's cast, who've taken some of the comedy's life lessons to heart.

"Just do what you want in life," Cosgrove said. "Don't let anybody tell you what to do with your life and your decisions. Do what you love."

*Jordan Gass-Poore' is an English, mass communication senior at Texas State University. You can find her spending hours at her favorite local coffeeshop-turned-office and watching Battlestar Galactica on Netflix, much to the chagrin of her roommate. For those non-Texans, you can contact Jordan via Twitter @jgasspoore.*

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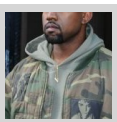
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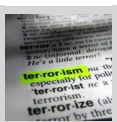
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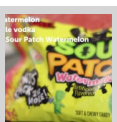
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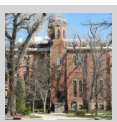
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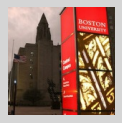
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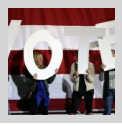
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