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Hey Daisy, Welcome to the 60's

“Daisy, time for bed! Cinderella is all set up on the T.V. for you!” This was something typical for me to hear as bedtime approached, growing up as a strong Disney princess fanatic. If it wasn't Cinderella, it'd be Snow White and it wasn't Snow White, it'd be Sleeping Beauty, and the list goes on. As I grew older, my love for musical films began to fade away, until a warm summer night in June of 2010, when I was reminded of my passion for musical films.

I had been taking a dance class and my dance instructor at the time assigned us to learn and perform a number from the 2007 remake of the musical film Hairspray. I had never heard of the movie and was excited to pop some popcorn that night and get comfy to watch it.

The lights were off, the air smelled like popcorn and I was all set to watch the movie. I remember hearing the first song from the first scene of the movie, which was “Good Morning Baltimore” and thinking to myself, “Ugh, another corny-musical movie”. But as the movie went on, the second song of the film, “Nicest Kids in Town”, shortly made its appearance and my whole perspective of the entire movie changed, and it was only the second song in the movie! As protagonist, Tracy Turnblad and best friend Penny Pingleton rushed to get home after school to watch “The Corny Collins Show”, a teenage dance show, their excitement and passion for dance and for the show transferred into me, and I found myself eager to watch the show with them. The 60's styled choreography in the song, “Nicest Kids in Town”, moved me in a variety of ways and

overall made me appreciate the 60's on a different level. The teenagers on "The Corny Collins Show" were dressed in typical 1960's attire- long dresses for the girls and suits for the men. As a 9-year-old girl, I remember thinking to myself, "Wow I wish I was born in the 60's and could wear a big dress and put my hair up like that with hairspray". I was fascinated by the culture and was so excited to watch the rest of the movie.

The film introduced me to many great songs and numbers including "I Can Hear the Bells"- where Tracy fantasizes about her school crush, Link, who also happens to be a regular dancer on "The Corny Collins Show", and "The New Girl in Town", which is performed by three women of color on the show's annual "Negro Day"- where once a year people of color are featured on the show and are given the opportunity to dance and perform songs. However, it wasn't until the song titled, "Hey Mama Welcome to the 60's", when I truly felt an emotional attachment to the movie. This scene reveals how Tracy's mother had not left her home in about a decade and in this scene, Tracy takes her mom out and shows her the beauties of the town they live in and the wonders of the 1960's. The song is sung by Tracy and the same 3 women of color from "The New Girl in Town". What I found most intriguing and beautiful about this scene is that Tracy explains to her mother that the world is changing and she is missing it by staying indoors, and when her mother finally takes a first look at the neighborhood, she sees a billboard with the three singing ladies of color and looks so amazed and admires them. It was this that made me appreciate the movie because it displayed a magnificent scene in which people of color were not being looked down on, especially in the 1960's, where segregation was very much still present.

As the movie progressed, I was introduced to another fantastic scene where Tracy, and antagonist, Amber Von Tussle run for Teenage Miss Hairspray, a title given to the girl with the most votes based on her dancing skills and overall character, on “The Corny Collins Show”. Amber tries numerous times to sabotage Tracy’s chances of winning. She calls Tracy on several occasions for being overweight and being unfit for the title of Teenage Miss Hairspray, but finally, Tracy makes it to the finals. This was when my favorite song of the film was performed- “You Can’t Stop the Beat”. In this scene, the winner is revealed and surprisingly, Tracy does not take the title but Inez, a young girl of color, takes the crown. I was so moved by this scene because it was the first time in history where a girl of color makes her mark on “The Corny Collins Show” and wins the “Teenage Miss Hairspray” pageant on the show. I thought it was a marvelous plot twist because the underdog was given a chance to shine and in a way, could possibly give those who have not been given many opportunities in life for being minorities some hope.

Ultimately, my experience with this brilliant musical film reopened my eyes to the beautiful world of musical theater. Since the first time I watched Hairspray, I have probably watched it another twelve more times and am always so eager to watch it when I hear it is going to be on T.V. My appreciation for musical theater increased significantly since “Hairspray” and has influenced the great passion I have for dance and Broadway. With the lively, upbeat songs from the film, and the comedic aspect to the movie, alongside the wonderfully choreographed dances, I grew a great love for the culture of the 1960’s, not only for the musical attribute, but its history as well. Since that warm night in June, I am reminded that it is okay to be that little girl

who loves to watch Disney princess movies, and it is okay to be 17 years old in college and be a fan of musical films. I have Hairspray to thank for that.

Works Cited

Shankman, Adam, director. *Hairspray*. MHE Ideal Entertainment, 2007.