**Italian Job: Minis Act Better Than Wahlberg**

By Lindsay Martin
Staff Writer

A fast-paced remake of the 1969 classic, *The Italian Job* is a thrilling heist film that pulls out all the stops. Mark Wahlberg plays Charlie Croker, a talented thief who masterminds a daring robbery at a palazzo in Venice. To complete the job, he uses the usual suspects: a demolition expert (Mos Def), a wheel man (Jason Statham), a computer genius (Seth Green), an inside man (Edward Norton) and an aging safecracker (Donald Sutherland). The prize is $35 million worth of gold bars. Plans change, however, when a member of the gang decides his share of the money is not enough and takes off with the treasure.

This setup not only turns the final "Big Heist" into an exercise in retrieving the gold, but also supplies a revenge motive. It also explains the remaining crew’s excessive zeal, which helps give the film some life. A stunning Charlize Theron plays Stella, who comes into the plot as the expert safecracker with her own personal motives. Edward Norton has always shown himself to be a top-rate actor; this is no exception. My disappointment came when I realized that the bulk of screen time was given to Mark Wahlberg and his forced acting skills. However, the international scenery and colorful supporting characters rescue the film, as well as the "real" stars, the quick, whizzing Mini Coopers (glaringly advertised in the previews), which provide a fresh image to the creative chase scenes, and give Stella the chance to show off her risky driving skills. This is crime at its best. How can anyone hate such a clever and humorous group of thieves?

This movie is a close relative to another recent all-star remake: *Ocean’s Eleven*, a similar caper film which relied on its big name cast members for its greatness, but lacked in many other areas. The director of *The Italian Job*, Gary Gray, struggles to keep up with the pace of this action-packed movie, and the predictability of the plot stays in the formula of similar heist movies.

The movie is a fun bit of entertainment, but don’t expect much more. It should be viewed with a sit-back-and-enjoy-this-show attitude. It’s a break from the reality of life, making the seemingly impossible become possible. The film fulfills its ambitious ambition of being light fare, something that won’t make you think long or hard.

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**Alumni are Homeward Bound**

By Sarah Dick and M.J. Sharp
Style Editor and Co-editor-in-chief

Up on the hill, things haven’t changed much.

Donna Souder noted that while older alumni may not be familiar with current EMU attractions such as the University Commons, they usually find the hill filled with old memories. At a lower altitude, the Alumni Relations Department has been busy organizing last minute details before the arrival of some eight to nine hundred registered guests and families. Representing a variety of ages, professions, and locations, EMU alumni will return to their alma mater for Homecoming. Even alumni from the 1920s make the effort to come. Attending Homecoming has been a priority for others as well. Kenton Zehr, leading heart surgeon at Mayo Clinic and 1983 Biomedical Major of EMU, canceled his forced acting skills.

Along with Jean Janson during the chapel. The words, written by poet Jean Janson, depict EMU’s mission and goals. Inspired by a $1000 competition, the music was selected from 60 submissions by the Encore Alumni Support Group. Encore chose the winning score from among seven finalists without knowing the composer’s identity. Goshen College graduate Shirley Bustos was the contest winner and will be recognized along with Jean Janson during the chapel.

In preparation for this weekend’s Homecoming events, Pioneer Foods and Physical Plant have joined forces with the alumni relations department. John Luc of EMU catering contractor Pioneer Foods has been swamped with meal orders for all of the alumni coming, while the Physical Plant has been responding to a steady stream of work orders. "We couldn’t do it without Phys. Plant," said Director of Alumni and Parent Relations Janet Stutzman.

Student organizations also have planned many activities for this weekend. "We just really appreciate students assisting us with this weekend," said Stutzman.

The Student Government Association (SGA) is sponsoring a bake sale and providing childcare to raise money for the Student Initiated Need Based Scholarship Fund, or the student fund.

The Student Education Association (SEA) is planning and organizing activities for children from kindergarten to sixth grade. All activities will be based on the theme of the weekend, "The World Next Door.”

A new aspect this year will be the coffee house put on by Student Life and the Homecoming Planning Committee. Bluegrass groups Reuben’s Potted Ferns and Daphne Creek will perform, and Professor Emeritus Omar Eby will read selections from his published works.

Other activities include the Loyal Royals’ Fun Run, the Marshmallow Mixer, and many department-sponsored meals. Times for these and other events can be found in the homecoming brochure or online at www.emu.edu/alumni/homecoming.