

'Joyful Noise' Sees Moderate Success Opening Weekend

Hitting theaters on Friday, the new musical featuring Queen Latifah and Dolly Parton made \$11.3 million at the box office this weekend, enough to push it into the top five.

"A funny and inspirational story of music, hope, love and renewal," the Alcon Entertainment and Warner Bros. Pictures film has been heavily marketed to the faith-based crowd.

Many reviewers have compared it to *Glee*, the television comedy/drama featuring a high school glee club. CNN Entertainment called the flick "a squeaky-clean pop-gospel fairy tale," but said "the movie's musical numbers are catchy and rollicking and, in their bright sunshiny way, rather soulful."

The *Los Angeles Times* wrote that *Joyful Noise* had some solid moments, but said the cast "is dealing with adequate material at best, and the noise is more dutiful than joyful."

The movie takes place in Pacashau, Ga., a small town that has fallen on hard times. Its people are counting on the Divinity Church Choir to lift their spirits by winning the National Joyful Noise Competition.

Although the choir has always known how to sing in harmony, the disagreements between its two leading ladies may tear them apart. While their new director, Vi Rose Hill (Latifah), stubbornly wants to stick with their tried-and-true traditional style, the fiery G.G. Sparrow (Parton) thinks tried-and-true translates to tired-and-old.

Things get shaken up even more when G.G.'s rebellious grandson, Randy (Jeremy Jordan, Broadway's *Bonnie and Clyde*), arrives. He has an ear for music, but he also has his eye on

Vi Rose's daughter, Olivia (Keke Palmer, *Akeelah and the Bee*). Sparks fly between the two teenagers, but their romance causes even more friction between G.G. and Vi Rose.

If these two strong-willed women can put aside their differences for the good of the people in their town, they—and their choir—may make the most joyful noise of all.

The musically driven film also brings together the sounds of gospel, pop, country, rock and R&B with memorable songs, performed by the cast, from a wide range of artists, including Michael Jackson, Usher, Chris Brown, Paul McCartney, Sly & the Family Stone and Stevie Wonder. Parton also wrote original songs for the film, including "Not Enough," "From Here to the Moon and Back" and "He's Everything."