



Rocco Fiorentino and Pilar Martin in a scene from the movie *Standing Ovation*. (Photo courtesy Kenilworth Films)

Stand Up for *Standing Ovation*

Junior high musical hits the big screen!
By Danielle Azzolina | July 21 , 2010

PRINT EMAIL



Standing Ovation is a rocking and colorful movie about musical competitions, friendship, loyalty, and dreams—BIG DREAMS! The recently-opened movie is a junior high musical produced by Rocky Mountain Pictures and Kenilworth Films.

My good friend Rocco Fiorentino plays Rocco Bateman in the movie. The part was written just for Rocco by writer/director Stewart Raffill, who was impressed by him after their first meeting.

Rocco is an accomplished musician at the age of 13. He is also blind. He talked to me at the movie's premiere in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, last week.

"My favorite scene was when we were on the beach and I was in the middle of the rocks, basically in the middle of the ocean with the piano," he said. "It was kind of nerve-wracking because the waves were really close and it was just awesome! It was a fun and great experience every day."

Standing Ovation is about following your dreams, something Rocco has plenty of!

"I'd like to be on stage someday, maybe Carnegie Hall, and have a band behind me," he said. "That would be a great thing to happen!"

The story is about two rival girl groups: The Wiggies and The Ovations. The two groups' rivalry escalates until the final contest when they compete against each other for a \$1 million prize.

The Wiggies are five sisters whose eccentric father, Mr. Wiggs, played by Sal Dupree, is so determined to win he is sometimes underhanded and devious.

The Ovations are a group of five best friends who have a collective dream to make it in the music industry. For one of the girls in the group—Brittany, played by Kayla Jackson—a win could help ease the financial hardships her family faces.

LOL moments came by way of Joei, played by Joei DeCarlo. Joei is one girl you don't want to cross. Her one-liners, zingers, and attitude are hilarious!

Soloist Alana Wannabe tries to make her dreams come true all by herself. Eventually she becomes part of a team and is in the competition. Alana's not afraid to tell anyone that even though she's a Wannabe, she's gonnabe someday! She is also very funny.

The cast of *Standing Ovation* is an amazing group of talented kids from New Jersey and Philadelphia. In fact, when Raffill met the kids chosen for the movie, he was still writing the script. After getting to know them, he began to tailor the script to match the personalities of the kids. The characters in the movie are very similar to what they are in real life.

The movie is about child empowerment, Raffill told me.

"I think that today there are so many movies for people of your age that are animation, that it's kind of refreshing in that sense to see a movie—particularly a girl-oriented movie—where it's about real kids and their real peers and their real issues," he said. "I think it shows people that if you try hard you can overcome hardships, but you have to train to do it."

Most of the films today are made in Hollywood or New York and feature kids from all over the world. Raffill approached his film differently. He wanted to make a movie about kids from a specific neighborhood. *Standing Ovation* is a tribute to the talent that exists in the area where the movie was filmed.

"It's a piece of Americana," he said.

The kids are all from the towns they portray in the film. That's one of the many reasons I loved it.

For more information about *Standing Ovation*, [check out its website](#). And check out Kid Reporter Danielle Azzolina's post about the premiere of *Standing Ovation* on the [Scholastic Kids Press Corps Blog](#)!

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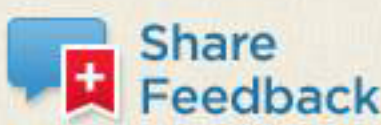
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