

HotRodGangLewLandersGeneVincent1958TextTVS

By Tim Van Schmidt

Hot Rod Gang ***

For a lightweight comedy, there's plenty of action in this movie. Hot rod cars, willing girls, fist fights, rock and roll, juke boxes, dancing- it's all happening here despite the lame teenage hijinks in between the action scenes and the screwball contributions of the older members of the cast.

There's a lot of music here, featuring the male lead, actor John Ashley as a finger snapping vocalist, making his way onto the hit parade thanks to the help of Gene Vincent.

Vincent is the real rock and roller here- and stands out when he's on the screen- and he gets to perform a few tunes. Vincent is a slick dresser and his stage show features a couple of fellows in sailor suits adding dance moves and handclaps to the music. Despite the generally wooden dialogue, he looks more comfortable with playing a role than the actual actors do.

But the music is a means to an end- to earn enough money to build a super slick hot rod a young "gang" wants to enter into the races. There's some problem with the police, there's some sneaking around behind the backs of the witless adults and there's some backstabbing and reckless violence added in.

Directed by Lew Landers...1958...72 min...featuring John Ashley, Jody Fair, Steve Drexel, Lester Dorr, Doodles Weaver, Dorothy Neumann, Claire Du Brey, Helen Spring, Gene Vincent.