

SNEAK PEEK THE BRONZE

Rauch could win an Olympic medal in raunch

Foul-mouthed gymnast is 'Big' shift

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With her new sports comedy The Bronze, Melissa Rauch is going for the gold in spouting obscenities.

Written by the actress and her husband, Winston Rauch, the Sundance Film Festival favorite (in theaters July 10) is an adventurous pole vault away from Rauch's wholesome, good-natured Bernadette on CBS' The Big Bang Theory.

Her Bronze role as Hope Ann Gregory, a washed-up former Olympic gymnast whose vitriol knows no bounds, is so unlike Rauch that people who've never met her "think she's the nastiest person on the planet," says director Bryan Buckley.

Rauch concedes that "dropping f-bombs and eviscerating people was super-fun."

Combining the underdog story of Rocky, the quirky comedy of Napoleon Dynamite and the vulgarity of Team America: World Police, The Bronze finds Hope a



PHOTOS BY ALICIA GBUR, RELATIVITY MEDIA

Lance (Sebastian Stan, left) and gym manager Ben (Thomas Middleditch) can't stand in the way of Hope Ann's (Melissa Rauch) dreams of a comeback.

fascinated by the "fickle nature of celebrity," especially when it happens to a youngster unable to escape that one shot of glory. Plus, "I am under 5 feet tall, so when we thought about doing an athlete, we realized there weren't many I could play other than a gymnast."

Gary Cole co-stars as Hope's enabling father, Stan, and Thomas Middleditch (Silicon Valley) is Ben, a childhood friend who harbors a crush on Hope and runs the financially strapped gym co-owned by Hope and Maggie's former coach.

Hope is the film's main antihero until the introduction of Lance Tucker (Sebastian Stan), her gold-winning nemesis and the guy who took her virginity. "She's the one who you kind of hate, and then when he comes on, you're like, 'Oh, there's actually someone worse than Hope,'" Rauch says.

Buckley teases that the "game-changing" sex scene between the two gymnasts is chock-full of crazy moves and will go down as "an inventive way to look at how we reproduce, for sure."

"It certainly opens your eyes up to what's possible in the bedroom with the right amount of passion and strong enough lats."

decade after achieving global fame at the 2004 Rome Olympics by winning the bronze on a torn Achilles.

America quickly forgets about Hope, though, and she winds up back in her hometown, Amherst, Ohio, the only place that still — mostly — loves her. While she manages to rate free milkshakes at the local diner, "the young girls just think she's a freak show," Rauch says.

She has spiraled into a life of resentment, pent-up anger, four-



Hope's bitterness has reached Olympic proportions.

letter words and wearing the same worn-out warm-up suit every day. But there is a budding gymnastics prodigy on the rise, teenage Maggie (Haley Lu Richardson), and when their shared former coach dies, Hope is tapped to oversee the youngster through to the next Olympics — with a \$500,000 inheritance on the line for Hope from her late mentor.

"Haley took home some phrases that she can repurpose as she will," Rauch jokes.

The actress always has been

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CROSSWORD EDITED Timothy Parker BY Carl Cranby PUT IT THERE! ACROSS 1 Bygone despot 5 Big loser's nickname? 9 Bank in billiards 14 "Not to mention..." 15 Not yet final, at law 16 Shout from Peyton Manning 17 Good use for a can of worms 18 Large wading bird 19 Haul to the station house 20 At issue 23 Felt bad about what one did "Malcolm X" director 25 Cooking meas. 28 Big office assignment 31 Space-saving abbreviation 34 Words before time or another? 36 "Act your \_\_\_!" 37 Mishmash 38 Mass midpoint 42 Rainfall measurement 43 Big galoot 44 Big dipper 45 It has a nail you shouldn't strike 46 Come apart 49 Bard's "always" 50 Finish 51 Biblical birthright seller 53 Feature of sensible people 61 Big name in violins 62 Large ice cube? 63 Sitting on one's hands 64 Cut into cubes 65 Muscular fitness 66 Unpleasant emanation 67 Fairy tale 68 Stitched line

Crossword grid with clues and Wednesday's Answer: SCALPEL ATOLL USA LOCAL BELIE PHD OVEERFILLING POI TERI NYLON ZERO ANTI SECURES RAPTURES TALC ALLI PORCH YURTS GUEST ORE USURP AMATI SARIS SEA LOAF GAMES TER SHALLOTT ASH LAME WRING ELAN ONO SLICE OF LIFE SOD PECOS OVERT HIE ARENT PESOS

WORD ROUNDUP By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek Find and Circle: Paul \_\_\_ Four five-letter words with OO \_\_\_ eclipse Fictional horned creature Incorrect Wednesday's answer: SNEAKER SLIPPER SANDAL BOOT SOCK / WINTER SPRING SUMMER AUTUMN / SALAMANDER FROG TOAD NEWT / CASHEW ALMOND / BROOK QUICKCROSS By John Wilmes 1964 film, "\_\_\_ Las Vegas" Assert Appear Catch a glimpse Flower holder Singer Burl HBO show with Louis-Dreyfus Military force

UP & DOWN WORDS 1. ABOVE 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. AGAINST Clues: 1. Higher than 32 degrees F 2. Frigid 3. Fruity refreshment from the fridge 4. Toddler's beverage of choice 5. Girder 6. Transport like Scotty 7. Confronted with Wednesday's Answer: JACK BELT BUCKLE UNDER ARREST WARRANT OFFICER PLAY ONLINE PUZZLES.USATODAY.COM

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TXTPERT- Across 2. 723353 5. 35684552 6. 7245 7. 464 8. 724 Down 1. 4233 2. 74568464 3. 32848 4. 3622746 6. 767 7. 469

Today's theme: Nautical Use the phone keypad to decode the clues. For example: ? could be A, B or C... and 5678 could be IOSF

DON'T QUOTE ME Canadian director David Cronenberg reflects on technology. Rearrange the words to complete the quote. EXPRESSION HUMAN NO PURE SEPARATION TECHNOLOGY WILL IS US. THERE IS \_\_\_ IT'S A \_\_\_ OF \_\_\_ CREATIVE \_\_\_