



Thursday, December 3

Critic's view

Jim Schembri

Rudely Interrupted

ABC1, 9.35pm

IT'S all euphoria and excitement when the announcement is made that the alt-rock band, Rudely Interrupted, is to tour overseas and make history by being the first pop group ever to perform at the United Nations in New York. With five of its six members suffering some sort of mental and/or physical affliction — blindness, deafness, Asperger's syndrome, Down syndrome, autism — the prospect is for a unique and bumpy adventure. But even before they leave their rehearsal garage for this warts-and-all rockumentary, the sparks start flying. Guitarist and lead singer Rory is blind, has Asperger's, is highly articulate and possesses a grand intolerance for other people's shortcomings. He is a born argument starter, much to the chagrin of Rohan Brooks, the band's hapless manager/guitarist. As they trek to New York, then on to Canada and Britain, the band is beset with bad luck — their New York liaison gets hit by a car, their van is stolen and ransacked — and tests of solidarity as Rory constantly imposes his will over the other, quieter members of the

band. Though the other members have distinctive personalities and interests, producer/directors Susie and Benjamin Jones can't help but allow Rory to dominate proceedings. The sojourn is thankfully free of condescending sentiments or false notes about five challenged people brought together by the power of music. Their story comes across as a genuine achievement rather than as a patronising fairytale of triumph over adversity. The adventure is certainly heartening but often far from heart-warming.

The Power of the Powerless

ABC1, 8.35pm

AS PART of the 20-year anniversary commemorating the fall of the Berlin Wall and the overdue collapse of communism comes this compelling chronicle of the Czechoslovakian experience and how central were student movements to the mobilisation of the populace to resist, then defeat the Soviet power puppets. A trans-generational roster of participants is interviewed at length to detail the narrative, from the riots that followed the 1968 "Prague Spring", when attempts at reform induced the bloody Soviet

invasion, to the history-changing events of the "Velvet Revolution" in 1989. Chief among them is playwright Vaclav Havel, who went from dissident to the country's first post-communist president. Most notable is the account the film gives of those who did not openly support early moves for change, making the reasonable point that the principles of free speech and opposition are all well and good but can sometimes be overwhelmed by the need to protect the future of your family.

The Office

Channel Ten, 8pm

IN THIS special two-parter, the drones at Dunder-Mifflin are offered extra holidays if they can collectively lose more weight than other branches in the company. As usual, office manager Michael Scott (Steve Carell) and his dour acolyte, Dwight (Rainn Wilson), offer the biggest laughs as they attempt to motivate the team. The romance between Jim (John Krasinski) and Pam (Jenna Fischer) now lacks any spice and is outdone by Dwight's illicit sessions with office ice-queen Angela (Angela Kinsey), who is supposedly promised to somebody else.



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The six members of Rudely Interrupted travel to the US to perform for the United Nations