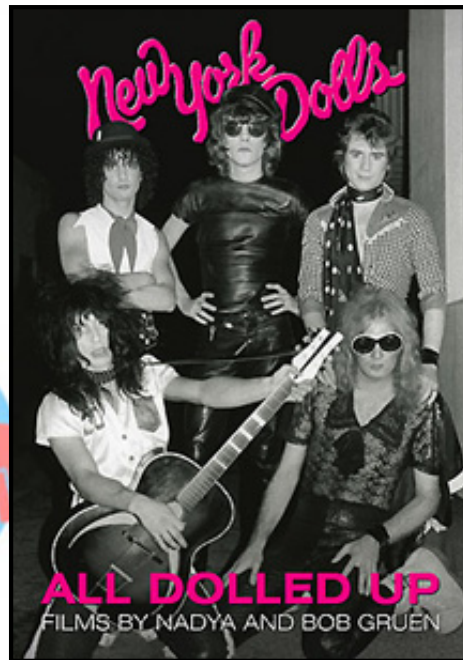


THE NEW YORK DOLLS: ALL DOLLED UP

Films by: Bob Gruen and Nadya Beck

Reviewed by Winslow Leach



THE REVIEW: In the early 1970s, Rock and Roll was undergoing another wave of change. The hippy love-ins were over and something fresh had to happen. One of the most important groups of that era was The New York Dolls. The band originally formed in 1971 and their first onstage performance took place at a homeless shelter on Christmas Eve. The band was: David Johansen (Vocals), Johnny Thunders (Guitar), Sylvain Sylvain (Guitar), Arthur "Killer" Kane (Bass) and Jerry Nolan (Drums). The Dolls not only had their own sound (a mix of Blues and Rock) but they also dressed very differently. Their look could be described as "trash-glamour". Some may think the Dolls were trying to dress like women, but as Bob Gruen explains on this new DVD, the Dolls were merely just pretty looking guys in crazy outfits and they weren't gay. Noone dressed like The Dolls, neither women or men. Their look/style was 100% their own concept. The Doll's music was influenced by bands like Marc Bolan, the MC5, Iggy Pop and many R&B acts as well. What The Dolls brought to their performances was a sense of high campiness and self conscious humor. The New York Dolls were by no means great musicians, but their sheer audacity and willingness to push the envelope made them a huge sensation with listeners looking for something daring and hip. The Dolls were essentially the first glam-punk rockers and they had a major influence on The Ramones, The Sex Pistols, The Damned among other punk rock acts of the

mid to late 70s. Not only did The Dolls influence punk, they were the forefathers of the 80s Glam Rock resurgence which was led by bands such as Hanoi Rocks and Motley Crue.

The Dolls released two studio LPs, their 1973 self titled album and "Too Much Too Soon" in 1974. The Dolls were creating a big buzz especially with rock critics, but their albums didn't sell very much. They were later dropped by their record label and managed by Malcolm McLaren (who would later form and manage a little group from the UK called The Sex Pistols). The band continued to play for awhile more, but their glory days were soon over. They kept playing until 1977 when they officially broke up. In 1975, Jerry Nolan and Johnny Thunders left The Dolls and formed The Heartbreakers. During The Sex Pistols 1976 tour, the Heartbreakers opened for them. Johnny Thunders continued to tour and record throughout the 80's, but he never got off the drugs. He later died in New Orleans in 1991 of an alleged heroin/methadone overdose. Jerry Nolan died a few months later in 1992, following a stroke, the result of bacterial meningitis.

THE NEW DVD: Rock photographer Bob Gruen and his wife Nadya had bought a new portable video camera and their first use was recording the antics of their new friends the NY Dolls while they performed on tour at different clubs including Max's Kansas City, The Whiskey A Go Go, The Real Don Steele Show and Rodney Bingenheimer's English Disco. We get to see close up what it was like to hang out with them. While the documentary footage doesn't exactly give a lot of real information, the audio commentaries by Bob Gruen, Sylvain Sylvain and David Johansen give a nice account of what the band was thinking about and details on their lives at the time they were in the band. In the DVD Extras, Ramones protege Handsome Dick Manitoba interviews Bob Gruen in 2004 and we hear more about what it was like to be around The Dolls at that exciting time of the early 70s. Bob Gruen also narrates a really beautifully shot Dolls photo gallery which he took himself. In these photos you can see other Dolls' friends such as their girlfriends like Sable Starr, fellow proto-punk legend Iggy Pop and Producer-Singer Todd Rundgren. For longtime fans of The Dolls, this DVD is a must own.

For more info on The Dolls read Horace Bone's review of [NEW YORK DOLL](#)

THE DVD

REGION: 0

STUDIO: Music Video Distributors

FILM SPECS: Presented in (4:3) Fullscreen. Black and White.

EXTRAS: Full performances of 12 Songs, Deluxe 16 page Photo Booklet, Extensive Photo Gallery with Bob Gruen Narrative, Interview with Bob Gruen by Handsome Dick Manitoba, Audio Commentary by David Johansen, Sylvain Sylvain and Bob Gruen.

AUDIO: Dolby Digital 5.1 Surround Sound.

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