

# New York Dolls DVD is essential viewing for fans

**ARTIST:** New York Dolls  
**DVD:** "All Dolled Up" (Music Video Distributors)

**R**ight around the time he met the New York Dolls in 1972, rock photographer and current part-time Tannersville resident Bob Gruen invested in a piece of brand-new, cutting-edge technology: a video camera. With his wife, Nadya Beck, Gruen shot over 40 hours of black-and-white tape of the infamously outrageous Dolls — singer (and, later, sometime Woodstocker) David Johansen, guitarists Johnny Thunders and Sylvain Sylvain, bassist Arthur "Killer" Kane and drummer Jerry Nolan, who replaced overdose victim Billy Murcia — something the filmmakers and band did purely for fun, as back then there was no public access cable to air it, let alone MTV. But fun was what the New York Dolls were all about.

And if you caught the screening of "All Dolled Up" at the Colony Café in Woodstock earlier this week, you're well aware of that. If you missed it, cheer up: the fascinating 95-minute film is now out on DVD.

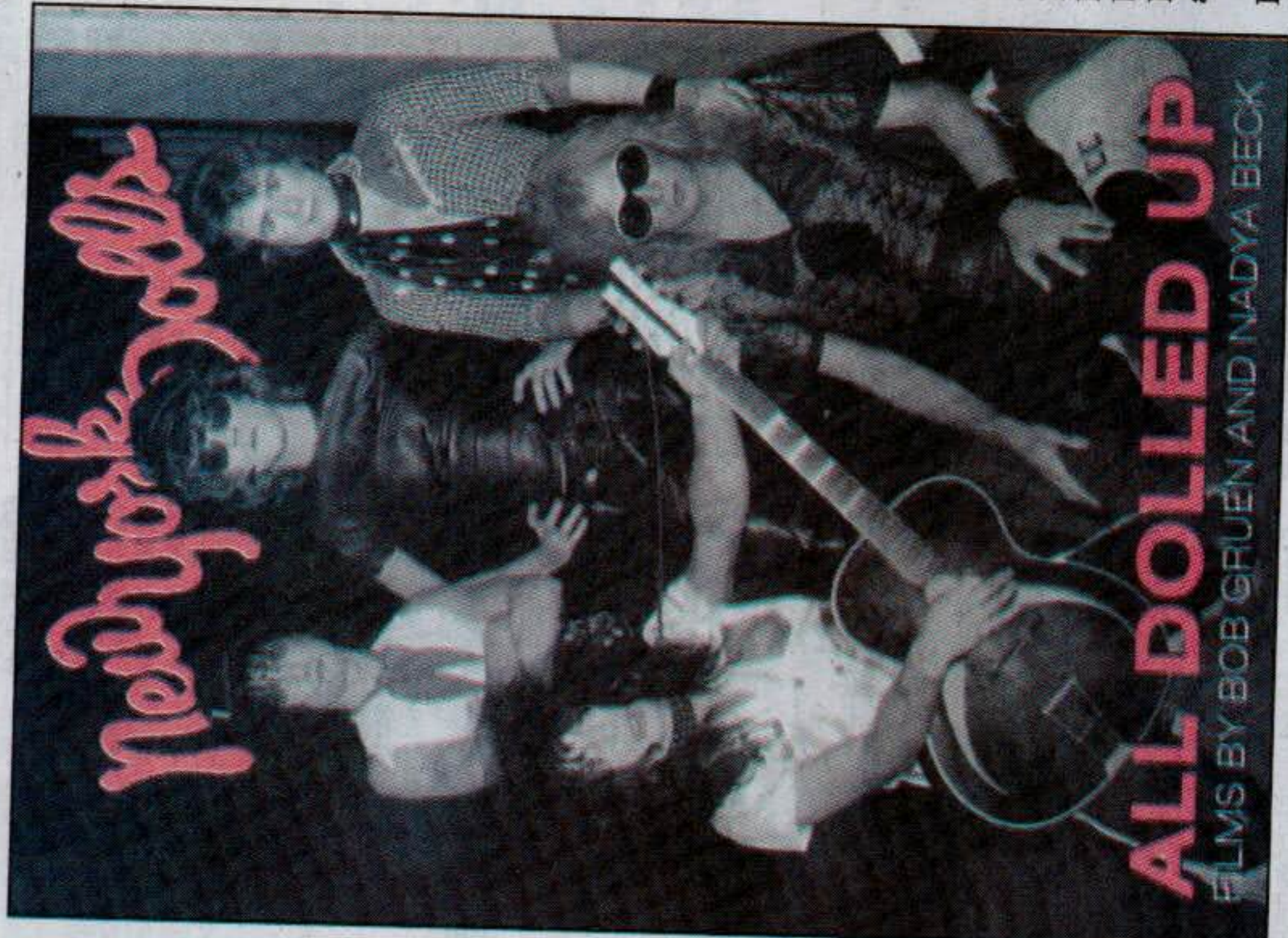
Gruen and the group were made for each other. In the early '70s there were few bands more camera-ready than the New York Dolls. Initially

playing to the downtown arts crowd, the unabashedly straight quintet pioneered glam rock and challenged sexual stereotypes with a look that flirted with the make-up and dress of the drag queens in their audience. Nowadays, when Dolls visual plunderers like Motley Crue and Poison are recent phenomena, few would bat a mascara-ed eyelash at such trappings. But then, when most of America was either a sea of brown suede and tie-dye or still stuck in the 1950s, it was an act of defiance that might get you killed or, at least, beaten up — even in cosmopolitan New York.

Still, image is meaningless if you don't have the music to back it up. And the Dolls, one of the most influential bands of all time, had the music in spades and spades. A powerhouse of raucous, trashy, butt-kicking rock 'n' roll, they put their own much rawer spin on the Rolling Stones' blues-based sound;



**Peter Aaron**



**"New York Dolls: All Dolled Up, Films by Bob Gruen and Nadya Beck"**

fueled by pure attitude and not letting their lack of musical training get in the way, they re-introduced rock's original tenet: Anyone can do it. Besides leaving their mark on their hard

## Sound advice

rock contemporaries Aerosmith and KISS, the Dolls are widely acknowledged as a direct influence on their punk successors — the Sex Pistols, The Clash, Blondie and the Ramones all cited them as a major inspiration.

**THE PRECIOUS** live footage here — for so long available only on scuzzy bootlegs — is interspersed with interviews, TV news clips and backstage craziness, and takes on a special poignancy as Thunders, Nolan and Kane are now gone. (The group reformed in 2004 with Kane, who died later that year; Thunders and Nolan succumbed to drugs in the '90s.) Extras include a 16-page booklet, an interview with Gruen by The Dictators' Handsome Dick Maniotoba, a photo gallery and more.

Those unacquainted with the Dolls' music should start with their first two albums, but for many this vital document will make the perfect stocking stuffer. Especially if said stocking is of the torn fishnet variety.



# Ashokan artist shows works at Catskill office