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NEW YORK DOLL

Directed by Greg Whiteley
78 min, 2005

www.newyorkdollmovie.com

ALL DOLLED UP

Films by Bob Gruen and Nadya Beck
95 min, 2005

www.musicvideodistributors.com

Two wonderful documents related to the New York Dolls have recently surfaced--*All Dolled Up*, a collection of vintage Dolls footage assembled from the private collection of rock photographer Bob Gruen, and *New York Doll*, the simultaneously heartbreaking (pardon the pun) and redeeming tale of Dolls' bassist Arthur Kane and the realization of his dream to see the New York Dolls reunite.

The story of the Dolls is a tragic one: a band that was tremendously influential on rock music, and yet has not seen royalties on their record sales to date. As Morrissey accurately points out in *New York Doll*, it usually takes 30 years, and even deaths (the Dolls ultimately lost three members to drugs), for the music-consuming public to finally catch up and realize how important particular artists were/are. In fact, it was Morrissey's love of the Dolls that led him to orchestrate their reunion for a music festival he organized in London in 2004. *New York Doll* documents Arthur "Killer" Kane's journey--spiritual and emotional, as well as physical--to come together with his old bandmates. In an effort to turn his life around, and break the grip of alcohol on his life, Kane had converted to Mormonism, an experience he described as akin to an "LSD trip from the Lord." He had prayed constantly that he might be granted the opportunity to meet up with the surviving Dolls to make music...and peace. His prayers were answered. Some friends from the church lent Kane the money to get his instruments out of the pawn shops and he was off to New York for rehearsals. The two shows in London were a phenomenal success and Kane was happier than he'd been in nearly 30 years. Three weeks after the shows, back in California, Kane made a trip to the emergency room where he was diagnosed with leukemia; two hours later, he was dead.

All Dolled Up provides viewers--hardcore fans and novices alike--with an intimate glimpse of the New York Dolls during their all-too-brief heyday. Culled from about 40 hours of footage shot by Bob Gruen and his wife Nadya Beck, which they made with an early home video recorder prototype, *Dolled Up* is an essential historical document. The technology was crude and thus, by extension is the final product. Nevertheless, we are treated to footage of the Dolls at Max's Kansas City and the Whisky a Go Go, backstage antics, drunken obnoxiousness in late-night diners, and their notorious Halloween Party in the Grand Ballroom of the Waldorf Astoria (where the first prize for best costume was a "weekend for three at a motel in Newark"). The DVD includes plenty of added bonuses, including commentary on the footage from Gruen and surviving Dolls David Johansen and Sylvain Sylvain. **-EDWARD BURCH**

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