

THE KNOWLEDGE

“ROCK ‘N’ ROLL WAS JUST IN HIS BLOOD”

Documentary on the late Heartbreaker ‘Looking For Johnny’ premieres in London.



On a warm night in June, *Vive Le Rock* attended the UK premiere of the eagerly awaited Johnny Thunders biopic ‘Looking For Johnny’. Several years in the making and the follow-up release to his ‘The Rise And Fall Of The Clash’ documentary, Danny Garcia’s film features rare footage of Johnny’s bands Actress, the New York Dolls, the Heartbreakers and the Oddballs as well as his rarely seen French film roles. A host of cameos from the likes of Walter Lure, Sylvain Sylvain, Terry Chimes and Lenny Kaye gave an insight into Thunders’ life and crimes as well as touching on his still unexplained death, which now seems to be partly attributed to him suffering from Leukaemia. In attendance on the night were director Danny Garcia, the Only Ones’ Peter Perrett and JC Carroll from the Members, who contributed to the soundtrack and a host of London’s rock ‘n’ glitterati.

Vive Le Rock spoke to Jungle Records man Alan Hauser, who is releasing ‘Looking For Johnny’, to find out the story behind the documentary and his future plans for it.

How did you become involved in ‘Looking For Johnny’?
“Danny first contacted us way back in 2009 I think. Then he had a few delays with his Clash film due to music clearance problems. He knew so much about Johnny already, and a few conversations and seeing his Clash film convinced me he’d do Johnny justice.”

The film didn’t feature as much of The Heartbreakers music as I expected. Were there any problems with clearances?

“Actually there’s lots of Heartbreakers music in there, around ten tracks. There isn’t quite as much New York Dolls music as we hoped, but no-one notices, you didn’t. It wasn’t because of money; but the clearance terms were too restrictive (excluding certain territories and only for 2 years with no guarantee of renewing); so no use to us. Danny wanted the focus to be the dramatic story with music clips to illustrate, so it wasn’t a problem. If you want just music clips, you are spoilt for choice on Youtube.”

Do you have any particular memories of working with Johnny over the years?

“Lots. Good ones and bad ones of course. I prefer to remember him laughing and smiling. He was very witty and funny, as well as being very shy. Except when he got on stage.”

Why do you think Johnny Thunders has remained such a rock ‘n’ roll icon?

“Rock ‘n’ roll was just in his blood. His influences were the roots of rock ‘n’ roll and ‘60s garage and pop, along with the counter-culture icons of the time like the Stones, The MC5 and the Stooges. And he would never compromise. It was a lifestyle.”

What’s planned next for ‘Looking For Johnny’?

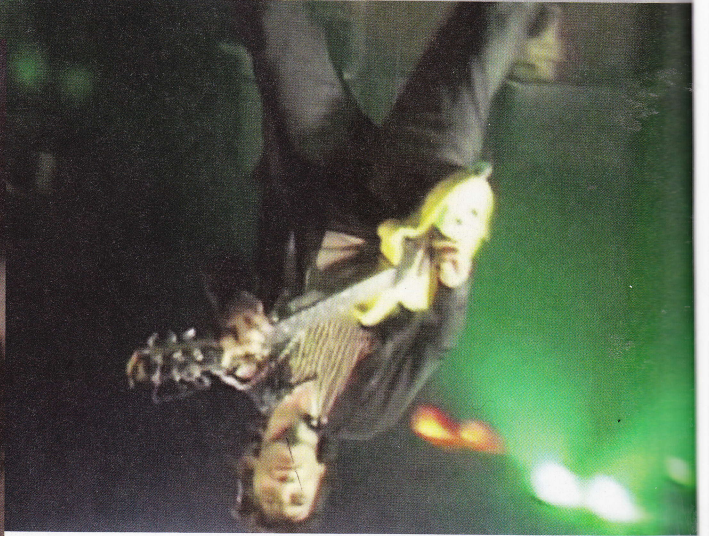
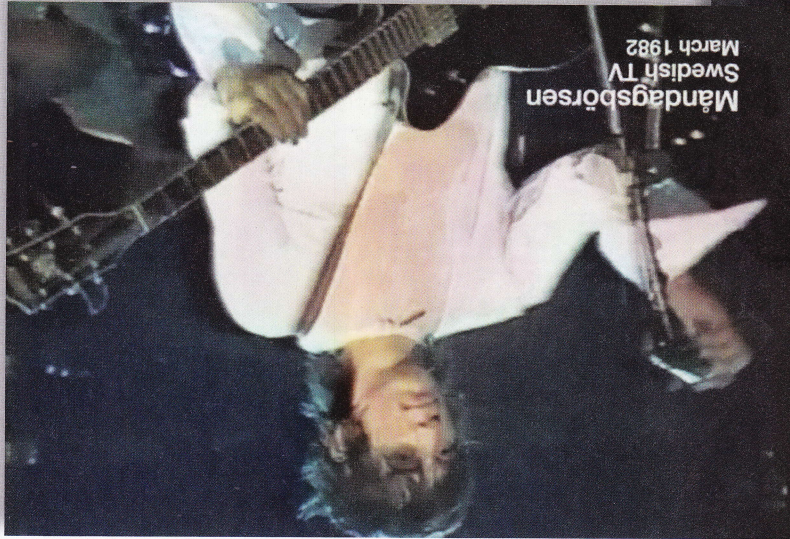
“It’ll be released in October, on DVD and digitally, through Jungle in Europe and MVD in North America. It’ll have subtitles in Spanish, Italian and French and a host of extras including three music clips. Also there’ll be a soundtrack album, initially exclusively on double-LP red patent leather vinyl in a limited, numbered edition.” **VLR**

There are three UK screenings of Looking For Johnny in September:
Sept 6 - Trash Cannes Festival, Hastings, East Sussex. with Vic Godard + the New York Dollies. www.trashcannesfestival.co.uk

Sept 13 - Portobello Film Festival – Pop-up Cinema, London W11
www.portobellofilmfestival.com

Sept 26-28 Doc’n’Roll Fest, Hackney Picturehouse, London E8
www.docnrollfestival.com





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