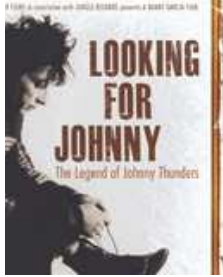


Looking For Johnny documentary

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'Self-pity is the most destructive of all narcotics' said the late London artist and self-styled dandy, Sebastian Horsley. In an uncanny way, his quote seems a befitting epitaph to the late and debatably great *Johnny Thunders*, legendary and tragic guitarist with **The New York Dolls** and **The Heartbreakers**.

But Thunders was much more than yet another rock 'n' roll drug casualty whose life ended in a New Orleans hotel room at the age of only 38. According to NY Dolls member *Sylvain Sylvain*, Johnny Thunders (born John Genzale) was one of the most talented rock 'n' roll songwriters ever, and one whose distinctive guitar sound inspired and influenced at least three successive generations of musicians. Now, Spanish filmmaker *Danny Garcia* (**The Rise & Fall of The Clash**) presents Thunders fans with this captivating documentary charting the life of the troubled musician from his birth on July 15th, 1952, in New York to his untimely death on April 23rd, 1991, in the aforementioned New Orleans hotel room. Looking at the early musical steps of Seniore Genzale Jr, the film offers rare archive photos of his high school years and early bands, and the revelation that Johnny Thunders decided to become a full-time musician after witnessing a concert by *Marc Bolan's* then band **Tyrannosaurus Rex**.

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Very interesting are the archive footage and photos of 70's New York, the Max's Kansas City and the CBGB days complete with the birds of paradise that were the early New York Dolls and colourful characters from Warhol's Factory. Particularly insightful is the depiction of the bond Thunders formed with fellow kindred spirit, Dolls drummer *Jerry Nolan* – a bond that some years later would culminate in the fiery Thunders & Jerry Nolan tour. A promising start with The NY Dolls, trouble was soon on the horizon in the shape of substance abuse, ego clashes and the usual perils that falls that come with the territory – seemingly and ironically in line with the title of a NY Dolls album, 'Too Much Too Soon'. In 1975, both Thunders and Nolan bid adieu to The NY Dolls and formed **The Heartbreakers**, together with *Walter Lure* and *Billy Rath*. After only one studio album, 'L.A.M.F.', failed to impress due to poor production quality (it was said the album simply didn't capture the sheer energy and raw spirit of the band's live gigs), The Heartbreakers soon disbanded and Thunders went on to new enterprises, but never without an ample supply of substances within close reach. Again, the Heartbreakers period, just like the NY Dolls period, is highlighted courtesy of archive clips of live performances, interspersed with interviews by ex-colleagues, close friends and other acquaintances including *Sylvain Sylvain*, *Walter Lure*, *Billy Rath*, *Lee Childers*, *BP Fallon*, biographer *Nina Antonia*, NY filmmaker *Rachel Amodeo*, ex-**Clash** drummer *Terry Chimes*, **Hanoi Rocks** and NY bassist *Sami Yaffa*, ex-**Hanoi Rocks** and now **Peckham Cowboys** riffer *Timo Kallio*, *Alan Vega*, former **Oddballs** and now **Londonse Joyriders** drummer *Chris Musto*, **Oddballs** singer *Alison Gordy*, former **Signe Signe Sputnik** guitarist *Neal X*, and many, many, more!

The documentary not only also chronicles Thunders personal descent into the abyss (especially after wife Julie walked out on him due to his excessive drug abuse, and took the kids with her). The title of Thunders' solo albums, including 'So Alone', 'In Cold Blood', and 'Hurt Me' speak for themselves... Between more fascinating and rare footage we get to see recordings of Thunders together with *Patti Palladin* for the joint album **Copy** and his musical collaborations with **The Oddballs**, a band with whom he continued to perform until his demise.

Disturbingly is perhaps the fact that upon the discovery of his corpse on April 1991, the authorities did next to nothing to launch an inquiry into Thunders death, instead dismissing it as yet another rock 'n' roll drug casualty. Despite the fact that his hotel room was searched and with personal items missing, and that the autopsy report states that the levels of drugs found in his system were not fatal (Thunders was on methadone at that point), however, advanced leukemia was evident.

Living rock 'n' roll guitarist, charismatic outlaw, occasional actor, rock 'n' roll junkie, allround sensitive soul... an artist who refused to play the corporate game... Johnny Thunders was all of those things and yet, his wild and troubled image has so far managed to eclipse the talent he had to offer and the musical legacy he left behind him. This thought-provoking documentary and the many archive clips, photos and interviews are bound to change Thunders negative image.

The DVD furthermore features a host of extras, including three bonus music clips including 'All By Myself' and 'Alone In A Crowd' by Thunders, as well as excellent track 'Looking For Johnny' performed by former **Oddballs** rhythm guitarist and **Diamond Dog** *Stevie Klasson*.

Remember a special soundtrack album will be issued to accompany the film, featuring 30 rare and exclusive tracks from Johnny Thunders and related artists, including the fabulous **Bermondsey Joyriders** with their poignant song 'Johnny Thunders Was A Human Being' (also featured in the end credits of Garcia's film).

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