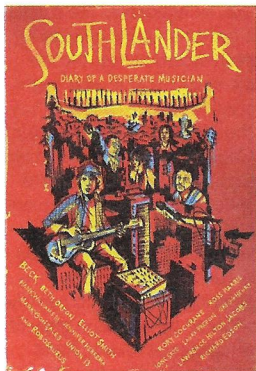


DVD★Reviews



Southlander

★★★

MVD Visual 76013785899

Cult slacker caper with heart

Both a love letter to, and send up of, the LA music scene of the late 90s, *Southlander* remains as "cult" as cult movies get.

Lead Rory Cochrane has form in these things, having appeared in both *Dazed And Confused* and *Empire Records*; here he is cast as Chance, a downbeat musician who, after snagging a coveted "69 Moletron" synth, earns himself a gig touring with local dub-pop act Future Pigeon. But – oh no, tragedy! – the synth gets stolen and Chance has to chase leads in the classifieds section of local paper *Southlander*.

Cue a string of set pieces that, while playfully mocking LA's underground culture, is also wholly enamoured with it. No surprise: the film was co-written by Ross Harris (who also stars in the movie) and Steve Hanft (who directs), both of whom worked with Beck during the early 90s, when LA's music scene was as sprawling as the city itself.

Characters with winning names like Steely Danzig and fading funk icon Motherchild pass through, as Chance – delivering a voice-over that adds a playful noir aspect – searches for his lifeline, which will also ensure his continued relationship with Rocket (Beth Orton), Future Pigeon's lead singer. Beck appears as "Bek", an early-90s version of himself who takes Chance to a pool party where one Lane Windbird is burning "ugly technology". The scene hints at Y2K fears of the time (something also explored in Beck's contemporaneous album, *Midnite Vultures*). What Hank Williams III's remote-controlled fire-breathing dragon signifies, however, is anyone's guess. *Inky Tuscardero*

Duff McKagan: It's So Easy (And Other Lies)

★★★★

Entertainment One, cat no tba

Surviving the unsurvivable

Guns N'Roses, Velvet Revolver, Loaded (and then Guns N'Roses again) – bassist Duff McKagan should be dead rather than writing autobiographies, doing spoken-word tours and becoming an investment mogul, but life is strange, and never stranger than in his case. Now 52 and long sober, Duff came within inches of death after years of drinking 10 (really, 10) bottles of wine a day and causing his pancreas to explode (really, explode). Years of therapy, fitness training and being a responsible dad have transformed him from destructive rock star to an actual contributing member of society, this latest contribution being a movie composed of live footage from a recent book tour, interviews with Duff, Slash and other related rockers and snippets of slightly irritating animation.

A high point comes with the kickboxing sessions Duff undergoes as part of his therapy, mentored by the legendary Benny 'The Jet' Urquidez, a fighter apparently made of pure sinew. Essentially this montage of scenes tells the tale of his punk teenage years in Seattle, the meteoric rise to global stardom, the deadly grip of addiction, the fragmentation of GNR and ultimately a timely step back from the brink. Like the book on which this film is based, it's pretty riveting material if you're interested in a) Guns N'Roses and b) the gargantuan effort which it takes to face this level of addiction. *Joel McIver*

Born To Boogie

★★★★

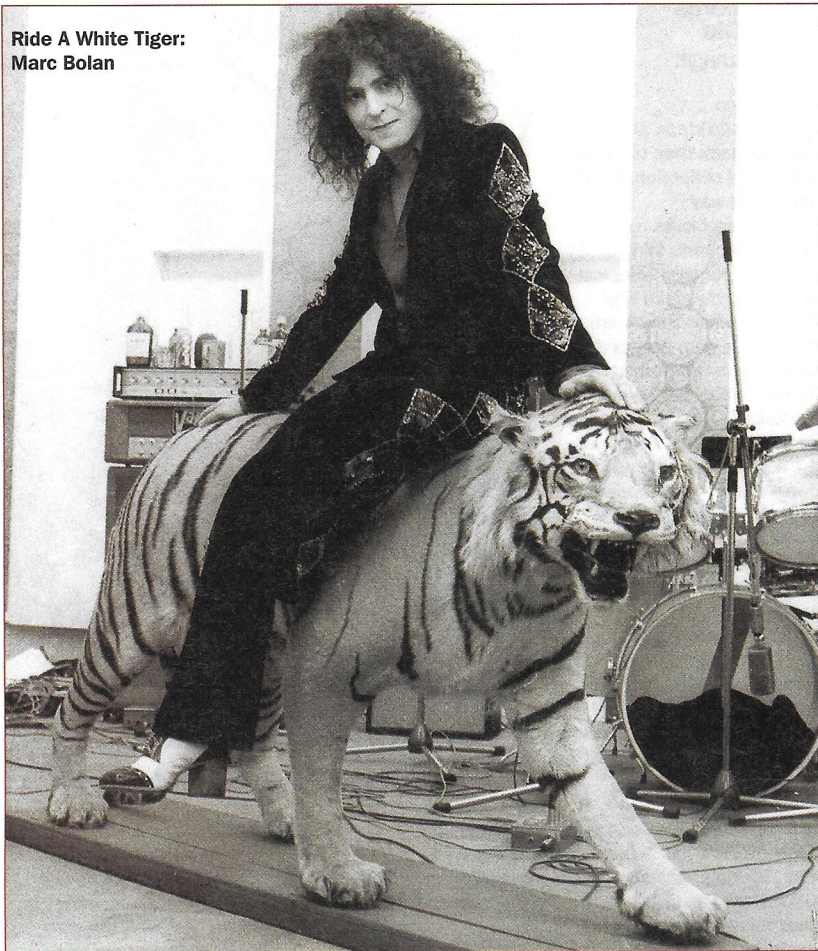
Demon, cat no tba

Bolan balls

They don't make them like this anymore. It's difficult to imagine today's biggest pop draw deciding to mark the peak of their career with a film in which fairly rough-and-ready live footage was interspersed with sketches that call to mind a *Grange Hill* take on Fellini (but less amusing than that sounds). But that's exactly what Marc Bolan did.

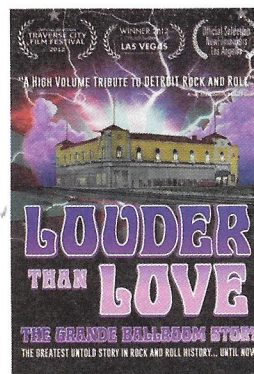
Want to see a top-hatted Bolan spouting gibberish in a red Cadillac with a man in what appears to be a mouse costume in the passenger seat

Ride A White Tiger: Marc Bolan



while a furious midget eats the car? Or perhaps acoustic takes on Jeepster and Get It On bolstered by a string quartet while a trio of suspect nuns and assorted ne'er-do-wells messily cram hamburgers into their faces, MC'd by Catweazel himself, Geoffrey Bayldon? Or maybe you just fancy seeing Bolan and Ringo Starr – seemingly dressed by children after one sherbet Dip-Dab too many – effectively inventing the blooper reel, fags in hand, just a couple of blokes having a laugh? If you answered yes to any of the above you're in luck.

The live footage confirms that T.Rex were a bit of a shambles in concert, but winningly so. These songs would lose a lot if they were played with any sort of precision or care. Most importantly, it captures the excitement surrounding the band, with close-up shots of shoddily coiffured youth clapping heroically out of time, out of their minds with lust. Bolan peacocks and gurns around the stage, indeed there's a fair argument for him having pioneered the hyper-pouts that dominate today's social media. A terrifically fun watch. *Jamie Atkins*



Louder Than Love: The Grande Ballroom Story

★★★★

MVD Visual 845121095630

Dope, rock'n'roll and fucking in Detroit's legendary rock hothouse

For five years after opening in 1966, the Grande Ballroom was the fabled epicenter of Detroit's rock'n'roll scene; a hotbed of hedonistic excess and an anarchic microcosm of the social revolutions fuelling those incendiary times. The MC5 and Stooges were house bands and others seduced by the Grande's electrifying atmosphere (and unique hospitality) include The Who, Led Zeppelin,

Cream, Fugs, Sun Ra, Velvet Underground, Move, Blue Cheer, Canned Heat, Big Brother, Love, Spooky Tooth and countless others, including local outfits and blues giants such as BB King and John Lee Hooker.

First-time filmmaker and Detroit resident Tony D'Annunzio's riveting documentary avoids behind-the-scenes skullduggery and the Grande's early 70s demise in favour of celebrating the glory days. Sprinkled with archive footage of Detroit royalty and memories from the great and good who treaded its boards, including Wayne Kramer, John Sinclair, Alice Cooper, Ted Nugent, Don Was, Lemmy, Grande staff (including founder Russ Gibb), misty-eyed punters and Roger Daltrey recalling how The Who chose it to unveil *Tommy*.

Watching the often jaw-dropping events that happened nearly 50 years ago, the Grande can also be seen as a final cataclysmic howl of defiance from a city heading towards decades of decline, but what a way to go! *Kris Needs*