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Double feature

Andrew W.K. celebrates release of concert film – a rising trend among bands – with screening, live show



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Andrew W.K. plans to perform at The Knitting Factory following a screening of a movie showcasing his band's music. He is part of a growing group of artists turning to concert films to connect with fans.

By **Michelle Castillo**
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Rock stars have always been larger than life. But thanks to the silver screen, that size is becoming literal.

On Tuesday and Wednesday, the band Andrew W.K. will celebrate the release of its concert movie, "Andrew W.K.: Who Knows?" with a double feature – a movie screening in Hollywood's The Knitting Factory followed by a live keyboard performance by lead singer Andrew.

"Andrew W.K.: Who Knows?" and recent films such as "Coachella: the Movie," "Neil Young: Heart of Gold," "Dave Chappelle's Block Party" and "Awesome: I ... Shot That!" add to the myriad of concert movies in recent release.

The concert movie is growing in popularity as a medium for bands to share their music. Although the concert movie traditionally has been used to immortalize the live performances of bands that have withstood the test of time, any band these days can try to record their experiences on film, from one-hit wonders to underground sensations to today's most popular bands.

The concert movie allows audiences to see what happens between stage performances. Often sharing anecdotes that show the band is more than guitars, microphones and amplifiers, concert movies allow audiences to make personal connections with band members, creating new fans and even more die-hard fanatics.

Andrew W.K. is one of those bands that is far from a being a household name. Despite having a solid fan base due to the success of their 2002 single "Party Hard," the idea for a concert movie had never crossed the band's mind. However, that all changed when lead singer Andrew was approached by Music Video Distributors. The concept for the concert movie, directed by Manrike, caught the band's attention because of the unique way the movie would showcase songs.

"(Music Video Distributors) decided that they would like to make a live concert DVD with me," Andrew said. "The director put together a script, which used about four years' worth of touring shot on video on various sources and various places. In total, it was about 300 hours of footage. Their idea was to combine several clips from different shows of the same songs."

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Movie theaters are picking up on the concert film trend. Screenings are now being held all over the country for concert movies, and the bonding shared by sweaty concertgoers standing in the pit has been replaced by the comforts of surround sound and air-conditioned seating. In conjunction with the upcoming Coachella music festival, "Coachella: The Movie" was showcased in 115 theaters nationwide. Bruce Springsteen screened the DVD of his 1975 concert in theaters, coinciding with his "Born to Run" 30th-anniversary box set. The last two concerts by Phish in Coventry, Vt., were broadcast in 54 select cities to an audience of about 400,000.

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Seeing the success of concert movie screenings, Andrew came up with the idea of coupling the screening with a live performance. Originally, the band was just going to go on tour, until Andrew suggested combing the filmed and live experiences.

"Initially, we weren't going to show the movie," Andrew said. "I was really excited about not just showing a movie and not just performing live, but combining the two. People are going to be in that (mind-set) of processing information off of the screen. Then, when you snap it back to a live performance, it's a contrast between a live in-the-moment concert and a prerecorded video.

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"It's the best of both worlds for the audience," he added.

Los Angeles will not be the first city to have the Andrew W.K. concert film screened. The movie was well received by other cities, with the format of the on-screen and onstage performance proving to be a hit.

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"We did some screenings in New York. We screened the movie and then I performed a keyboard solo. Each night the crowd got more and more rowdy, just watching the movie. It became almost like a live concert environment," Andrew said. "I thought, 'This was almost the same as far as the audience acts when I perform live!' The screening is halfway between seeing a concert in a venue and watching it alone."

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