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Movie Review: Hard Core Logo 2

BY ANDREW PARKER – APRIL 11, 2012

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Aside from a possible bout of nostalgia on the part of director Bruce McDonald, there really didn't seem to be that many reasons to make a sequel of any kind to his darn near seminal punk rock faux doc *Hard Core Logo*. At the end of the first film, the titular band's volatile lead singer commits suicide on camera directly in front of Bruce the Filmmaker, as his on screen persona was fully known. Without frontman Joe Dick (then played by Hugh Dillon), there wouldn't be much of a band to hinge much of a sequel or follow-up onto.

Thankfully, McDonald doesn't sell out by going the way of a direct sequel or a reboot in *Hard Core Logo 2*. While it might be unnecessary, there are quite a lot of interesting and fun ideas being played with by McDonald, who once again lets a lot of his own personality creep through on screen. This look at an entirely different band living in the shadow of the one from the original film has been described by McDonald as a B-side, which makes sense only if you consider the entire film to be a full album and not a single. It starts off casually and pleasant enough, but never trying to outdo the original, and it ends with a patently unlistenable 15 minute drum solo that reeks of vanity, good intentions, and poor planning all at the same time.

Bruce the Filmmaker has recently lost his job on a popular Christian television serial, and has fallen on hard times. Desperate to make something (or anything) once again and to once and for all shake the assessment that his character was ultimately complacent in the death of Dick, Bruce travels to Florida to meet up with real life Canadian goth punks Die Mannequin, whose lead singer Care Failure claims to be possessed by the spirit of the late Joe Dick. Bruce accompanies the band to Saskatchewan where they prepare to record a make-or-break album with Dick's onetime mentor Bucky Haight (Julian Richings).

McDonald gets some nice self-deprecating jabs at himself with his character here. He seems to understand quite fully the silliness of going back to the well one time too many, and he seems at ease with the comfort that old material brings. He also lucks into an interesting subject in Care Failure, who might not be much of an actress, but is someone who definitely understands her character both on screen and off.

The recording studio setting for most of the film doesn't always make for compelling viewing, with long, dry patches where not much happens of consequence despite Care being described as "a crisis every five minutes." There's only so long that Bruce can really dance around the "is she or isn't she possessed" angle, and a lot of sequences involving Bruce away from the rest of the band feel like padding. Even Bruce the character seems to think the cameras intrude too much on the recording process, making it come across as almost purposefully half assed.

But the padding is vastly preferable to the ending of the film, which is so wildly off base and almost distasteful towards the original film's ending that it hits the final sour note to make me think twice about outwardly giving the film a pass. Without giving away too much, McDonald hints at a pseudo-enlightened revelation throughout the course of the film, which when it comes from being seen a mile away, he proceeds to run it into the ground by going into business for himself. Even if this film is more about the filmmaker than it is the music or the band at the centre of it, the sheer narcissism of the final sequence smacks of the likes of Ad Rose lecturing the audience they don't want to hear anything from the new album. What McDonald might not understand is that people are listening, but they don't want to hear him drone on almost completely off topic at the end of an otherwise okay film.

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Rating: ★★☆☆☆

Rated 14A

Cast: Adrien Dorval, Care Failure, Shannon Jardine
Directed by: Bruce McDonald

Top image: A scene from Hard Core Logo 2. Courtesy Alliance Films.

TAGS: Alliance Films



About Andrew Parker

Andrew Parker writes for numerous blogs and publications, including Notes From the Toronto Underground and his more personal pop-culture blog, I Can't Get Laid in This Town. He is also the curator of the Defending the Indefensible series of films at the Toronto Underground Cinema.

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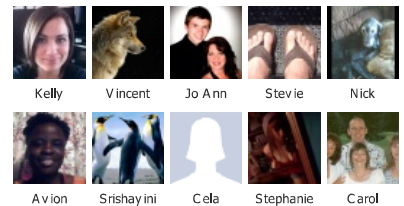
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