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Hard Core Logo 2 Directed by Bruce McDonald

REVIEWS | FILM | APR 12 2012



By Mathew Kumar

Although it's a strong contender for the greatest Canadian film, *Hard Core Logo* has never been a sacred cow to director Bruce McDonald, with a sequel (or at least, side-story) planned for so long, and without success, that it eventually morphed into last year's *Trigger* (which actually exists within the *Hard Core Logo* universe, if such a distinction isn't too dorky).

Perhaps as a defence against the criticism this film was undoubtedly going to receive as a direct sequel, McDonald has self-reflexively drenched it with meta layers that go far beyond his simple appearance as "himself" in *Hard Core Logo*, with the film almost entirely concentrating on his character's arc rather than the supposed stars of his documentary, *Die Mannequin* (in a too-cute touch, played by the real-life act). This sort of serves to suggest that the film isn't a sequel to *Hard Core Logo*, but a film about the idea of a sequel to *Hard Core Logo*.

It's all a bit Michael Winterbottom, but in *Hard Core Logo 2*, you're faced with the manifestation of something like *A Cock and Bull Story* if Winterbottom made the film almost entirely about a not-especially funny version of himself. What's worse is that in such a situation you'd lament not seeing more of Steve Coogan, whereas here *Die Mannequin* are potentially the least interesting rock band of all time, and considering this is a fictionalized account, one has to worry. Sure, *Hard Core Logo* covered the interesting and messy bit of rock'n'roll — the touring — and *Hard Core Logo 2* sets itself in the boring bit — the recording — but lead Care Failure, supposedly channelling *Hard Core Logo*'s Joe Dick, never manages to do anything more interesting than put in slow motion at the camera in staged shots, which she does about 300 times.

The high point is the film's coda, which still manages to be about the most wrong-headed attempt I've ever seen to wrong-foot an audience — an easy to mock "Everybody's Free (to Wear Sunscreen)" by way of Mogwai's "I Chose Horses" (in, er, Korean). But it's actually genuinely sincere and affecting, making the inherently distanced, ironic nature of the film preceding it all the more galling. (Alliance)

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