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Catching Up With Shane Meadows of *The Stone Roses: Made of Stone*

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The infamous cycle of so many of our favorite bands almost seems passé now. There's the initial hype, the rise to fame and the inevitable crash-and-burn. The process has given rise to its own film genre, the rock-doc, which itself has become both pedestaled and parodied.

But even when our musical idols have reunited, broken up again, or simply moved on, and the films that document them become repetitive, what remain are the fans. The people who can pinpoint moments in their lives in concordance with the crescendo of choruses and the reverb after closing verses are our kind, for whom clichés matter not.

And this spirit of fandom is what distinguishes director Shane Meadows' rock-doc, *The Stone Roses: Made of Stone* from others like it. Meadows himself grew up listening to the Roses, and when the opportunity presented itself to chronicle the Manchester band's 2012 reunion, he, like any true fan, pounced on it. Although the film received its Manchester premiere in late May, the documentary finally hits North American theaters for a limited run November 6 through November 13. Paste checked in with both Meadows and John Leckie, who produced The Stone Roses' debut album and appears in the film. Click [here](#) to see where *The Stone Roses: Made of Stone* is screening.

Paste: Why position the documentary from a fan's perspective?

Shane Meadows: I think there was only that way it could be. The whole way the film came about was from being fans. I was making a TV series, *This is England '88* and Ian [Brown] called and said, "We're getting back together," which was exciting news, not just as a filmmaker, but as a fan. And then he said, "Can you keep a secret and film a bit of it?" And suddenly, all bets are off. All the projects—I was about to do a massive film—were put on hold because I have to do this, even just to see them live! So in a lot of ways, it was a fan's film. A lot of music docs, especially ones on TV, tend to be people digging the dirt and a lot of talking heads, and I really wanted to avoid the talking heads. I really concentrated on how excited people were that this band is getting back together. It never was and never could not be anything other. The film took me in that direction.

Paste: What did you think of the film, John? Particularly how Shane positioned it from a fan's perspective?

John Leckie: I think the film is fantastic! Few music documentaries show the band from fans' perspective as strongly as this, and it just makes you fall in love with the band and the music all over again. It's a big glossy film, yet the characters are very natural and friendly and the stories of the escapades of the band are hilarious. For people new to The Stone Roses, it's a great introduction to the vibe of the band and how massive the comeback shows were and what it meant to everyone in U.K.

Paste: Tell me about your experience with The Stone Roses before this film. How did you discover them in the first place?

Meadows: Oh, it was literally on cassettes. It was a recording, and you didn't even know what they looked like. You just heard that album, and it was just incredible! So that was the first time, around flats and bedrooms and doing it as a teenager, and then you kind of get to see what they're

like and you suddenly see pictures of them in interviews and you see the attitude and punk spirit they had. It was such a new sound for the U.K. It influenced so many bands.

Leckie: I was sent a cassette tape of demos from Geoff Travis at Rough Trade, but by the time I'd called him back they had signed to another label. I went to Manchester, which had exciting vibe at the time, saw some fantastic shows, and within a week we were in studio cutting the album.

Paste: What was the premiere like in Manchester?

Meadows: Well actually, weirdly enough, I just found out there's a big industry award thing here (**Screen Daily's International Awards**). This year, we were nominated for Premier of the Year alongside *Star Trek* and *Les Misérables*, and we won the best premier of the year! It was great. It was full of fans. It was in a warehouse. So rather than it being in a cinema, we took over a warehouse. We had a rave; we got DJs from the area. It was fantastic, fantastic really.

I just found out about three days ago about this amazing prize. The premier was seen by about 4,000 people. But what we did was beam the premier and all the Q&As live to about 200 cinemas, so it was a really amazing experience for everyone all over the country.

Paste: What are you hoping for this upcoming limited American theatrical release?

Meadows: I'm so pleased it's off to so many cinemas, which is the first thing. I'm really proud. And I guess the second thing is that for me, there's more technical effort that's gone into this film than anything. It's got the intimacy of the rehearsals and the fans' perspective, so I think that even if you're just a massive fan of the band, the film works on that level. There's an emotional arc to dealing with what it's like to be a fan.

The finale of "Fools Gold," which was huge, I shot that with 35 cameras and a helicopter. It had more cuts in that one song than all of our feature films. So yeah, I think people should definitely see it in the theater.

Paste: Why do you think society still craves these kinds of stories? We still feel so attached to our favorite bands even when these narratives have been told. Why do you think that is?

Meadows: Everyone has something that reminds them of the great time of being a teenager, when a band captured your imagination. I still fall in love with new bands all the time. But I think to me, because the Roses were just cut off in their prime and then they never fulfilled. Not a lot of people saw them live. When I went to see them the first time—not with a camera, I just went to see them in a rehearsal room—I saw how incredibly these four people coming together give this kind of energy beyond the chemical elements that they were. You just go, "Oh my God, that's what we need!"

I'm not normally a documentary maker. Music is important in my films, but really, there was something about it being the Roses. I think that if it was another band asking me, I would have said no. But because it was the Roses, it was a story that had to be told.

Paste: What else have you been working on? What's next for you?

Meadows: To be honest, this is why I've unfortunately not been able to make it out to the States for the release. The Roses film we thought would take six to nine months; it took nearly two years. I'm actually locked away writing the next installment of *This Is England*, which is going to be set in 1990, which is being written with Jack Thorne, a writer. And then a big film about a cyclist, Tommy Simpson, who died on the Tour de France in '69, a kind of heroic cyclist, a *Raging Bull* kind of story in cycling that's being written with Billy Ivory. So at the moment, I'm locked away writing, and whichever one is the best ready next year we'll film.

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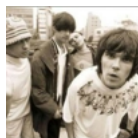
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