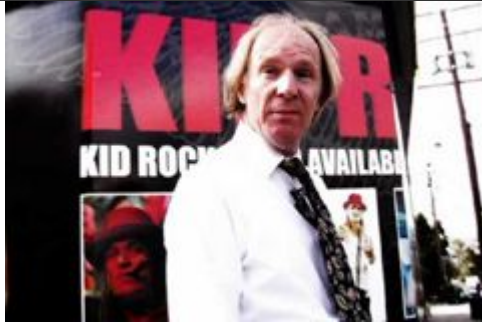


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NEW YORK DOLL



Starring Arthur "Killer" Kane, David Johansen, Sylvain Sylvain, Iggy Pop, Bob Geldof, Chrissie Hynde, Mick Jones and Morrissey. Directed by Greg Whiteley. Produced by Ed Cunningham and Seth Lewis Gordon. A First Independent release. Documentary. Rated PG-13 for drug content. Running time: 73 mi

Rightfully cheered by audiences at both the 2005 Sundance Film Festival and the recent Los Angeles Film Festival, Greg Whiteley's "New York Doll" is one of those rare documentaries that begins right and ends even better, providence endowing an already compelling project with even more remarkable real-life twists and turns along the way to a conclusion that rivals even the most imaginative fiction.

In the early '70s, bassist Arthur "Killer" Kane was one of the founding members of the New York Dolls, a seminal band whose androgynous looks and hard-driving music influenced an entire generation of punk, glam-rock and metal bands well into the '80s. It's a far cry from the quiet, conservative Arthur Kane that Whiteley discovers some three decades later, living in a simple studio apartment, riding the bus and deeply faithful to the tenets of his adopted Mormon faith. But neither Kane nor his co-workers at the genealogical library behind Los Angeles' Mormon Temple seem all that bothered by his past, particularly when Arthur is presented with the rare opportunity to rejoin his surviving bandmates -- guitarist Sylvain Sylvain and lead singer David Johansen (aka Buster Poindexter) -- for a one-night-only reunion concert in London.

Whiteley's agile chronicling of this magical moment in Kane's life, along with its equally intriguing aftermath, is the stuff of which great documentaries are made -- funny, inspirational, moving and, ultimately, philosophical. A merciful departure from the safely preplanned, pre-arranged and scripted fare that now constitutes the majority of documentaries, "New York Doll" instead models itself on the likes of "Gimme Shelter" and "Hoop Dreams," content to accept and embrace a story shaped by chance and the serendipity of life. Punctuated with poignant comments from the likes of Morrissey, Bob Geldof, Chrissy Hynde and Iggy Pop, it's a tribute to the redemptive power of both music and faith.

Much of this is, admittedly, just good fortune on Whiteley's part -- a matter of being in the right place at the right time. It's a bravura filmmaker, however, who can piece it all together in such a way as to find meaning in the margins. - **Wade Major**

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