

'It's a great document of band at a very, very specific moment'

'No Nukes' footage bypasses Springsteen's aversion to film

NEW YORK, Nov. 20, (AP) — If there's one thing Bruce Springsteen's fans can find fault with in their hero, it's his early aversion to film cameras.

Because of that, there is very little onscreen documentation of Springsteen onstage in the mid- to late-1970s, when the power and majesty of the E Street Band combined with youthful exuberance for some truly epic concert experiences. Without a ticket and a good memory, they passed you by.

That makes the release of a 90-minute film that shows them performing at the "No Nukes" benefit concerts in September 1979 significant for fans and music historians. It's found money.

Before a friendly crowd at New York's Madison Square Garden, Springsteen and his gang of Jersey toughs crackle with pent-up energy. They'd been off the road in 1979, recording "The River," and are thrilled to be before an audience again. Their typical four-hour show was condensed into 90 minutes. Sharing a bill with artists like Jackson Browne, Graham Nash, and Bonnie Raitt, they burned to show peers what they could do.

Little wonder, then, to see them burst onto the stage with a roaring version of "Prove it All Night." That's exactly what they intended to do.

When filmmaker Thom Zimny first reviewed the footage, it was without sound, and he could still tell something special was happening. "You see them explode onscreen," he said. "The sheer force of E Street at this point was amazing to see."

Springsteen explains that superstition led him to keep cameras away in those days, something about a musician not wanting to look too closely at his bag of tricks.

"I don't want to see what I'm doing, because it might change what I'm doing," he said recently, "and what I'm doing is working for me and it's working for the audience."

It's different now; all of Springsteen's shows are filmed. Back in 1979, the "No Nukes" concert escaped the film phobia because a crew was on hand to make a documentary on the benefit for alternatives to nuclear energy.

There actually wasn't much incentive for filming shows in the pre-MTV, pre-YouTube days, said Chris Phillips, editor and publisher of Backstreets, the website for Springsteen news. With no real outlet on television or the movies, "you were just playing rock 'n' roll," he said.

As a result, footage of more than snippets of Springsteen onstage then are relatively rare, he said. One show in Phoenix turns up on YouTube, recorded by his record company for a commercial to promote Springsteen in parts of the country where he wasn't well known yet. Portions of a Houston show, taken for an arena's in-house use, survive. So does a recording Springsteen's first show in London, at the Hammersmith Odeon in 1975.

Performances

A couple of Springsteen's performances appeared on the "No Nukes" documentary and album. Mostly, the footage remained locked away in a vault until Zimny was given access.

He turned it into the film that is being released now partly as a pandemic project.

"It was something that I did because I missed the band so much," Zimny said.

Unlike much of the surviving footage of Springsteen from those days, Zimny was working with quality film, shot by a crew that could provide multiple angles. Still, there are imperfections: images of Steve Van Zandt's solo on "Jungleland" are missing, perhaps because they were reloading cameras.

Zimny kept to the running list of the shows, held on back-to-back nights (including Springsteen's 30th birthday), and including some

different encores — the "Detroit medley" of covers one night, a performance of Buddy Holly's "Rave On" another. The shows included sneak peeks of "Sherry Darling" from "The River" and the upcoming album's title cut, and a duet with Browne on "Stay."

Rabid fans were always aware this footage had to exist, somewhere, Phillips said. Its emergence is a treat for the Backstreets editor, too: He didn't see Springsteen live until the "Born in the USA" tour five years later.

"After waiting 40 years for this, it does not disappoint," he said. "It's an amazing thing, with tempos that are off the charts."

That's evident when they play "Born to Run." Decades into the song's existence, its appearance in concert is now a karaoke-like ritual — the lights go up, everyone sings along. It was still a relatively new song in 1979, and the band attacks it on "No Nukes" with a double-time ferocity.

The film also illustrates how vital Clarence Clemons was to the show: catch how he and Springsteen make eye contact during "Rosalita," launching an extended choreography. Springsteen leans on him, literally and figuratively. With Clemons and organist Danny Federici now dead, the band's not the same.

The "No Nukes" film is on sale as a DVD or Blu-Ray disc, in separate packages with audio CDs of the music. The film won't be available on streaming services until next year; audio is available for streaming on Friday.

Zimny described how Springsteen, now 72, was juiced when he was first shown the concert footage, and quickly sang along with his 30-year-old self on the screen.

"We were young, we were kids," Springsteen said at a public screening last week in New Jersey. "What the film is packed with is youthful energy at a level that was surprising even to me when I saw it. It's a great document of the band at a very, very specific moment."

Music

Variety



This image released by Netflix shows Kirsten Dunst in a scene from 'The Power of the Dog.' (AP)

Film

Campion's film is a twisty psychological thriller

'Power of the Dog,' sublime gothic Western

By Jake Coyle

Tracking shots of a solitary figure striding across a Western plain, seen from within the darkened interiors of a home, bookend Jane Campion's "The Power of the Dog." As the man walks, with wrinkled foothills behind him, the camera glides through the house. He goes into and out of view with each window.

The man is Phil Burbank (Benedict Cumberbatch), a rough-hewn Montana rancher with a menacing arrogance and a cocky, upright posture. The first time we see him this way, through the windows, it's an early signal that "The Power of the Dog" will pulsate with friction between within and without, that its masterful vision of the West will play out in a juxtaposition of rugged exteriors and murkier, more mysterious interiors.

"The Power of the Dog" is Campion's first film since her luminous 2009 John Keats drama "Bright Star"; in the interim she made the series "Top of the Lake," the vivid New Zealand mystery. Even without stepping on a film set in 12 years, though, appreciation for Campion has grown. Her films, including her 1993 masterwork "The Piano," have only gained admirers for the way they capture assertive inner lives piercing social structures and male hegemony. In Campion's formally composed films, lyricism claws its way through.

Adapted by Campion from Thomas Savage's 1967 novel, "The Power of the Dog" is a return to form for Campion than a big-screen reminder of her virtuosity. The film, which Netflix opened in theaters Wednesday, isn't the Western you might think it is — though it does reside on the frontier. (Campion shot New Zealand for 1920s Montana, and its foreign, craggy mountain contours only enhance the feeling that this is not your traditional Old West.) There is Jonny

Greenwood's disquieting score, for starters. And the foreboding, oversized ranch house, a hulking wooden pile on dry grasslands, is also a hint that something more gothic is at play here.

There lives Phil and brother George (Jesse Plemons), a study in opposites. George is finely dressed, humble and decorous; Phil, while a studied intellect, seems to never take off his chaps. He revels in the outdoor life of the range. "I stink, and I like it," he says. Phil is confident he holds a greater understanding of farm life, masculinity and something more existential. He sees something in the folds of the looming mountain range that his men struggle to identify. One asks if there's something there. "Not if you can't see it, there ain't," Phil replies.

Psychodrama

But just what Phil can and can't see is at the heart of "The Power of the Dog," a film that, like the novel, takes its name from a Psalm. The full line goes: "Deliver my soul from the sword, my darling from the power of the dog." Dogs, seen in Biblical times as unclean scavengers, were a kind of stand-in for the devil. But whose soul is in jeopardy in "The Power of the Dog"?

It would seem very much that Rose Gordon (Kirsten Dunst, brilliant) is the one in the crosshairs. She's a widow running a boarding house whom George falls for and quickly marries. (Their romance, which Campion allows one sweeping shot of as they embrace with a cathedral of mountain peaks all around, has a special sweetness in that it's a real-life one, too.) When George brings her home, Phil isn't shy about his unhappiness in the intrusion of a woman into his manly realm. Though his brother has long ago learned to avoid or ignore Phil's fearsome glare, Rose begins to wilt under the pressure and starts drinking heavily. A psychodrama sets in, only where

the movie goes from here isn't as obvious as you might think.

The three's-a-crowd tension doesn't subside, but Campion's film steadily gravitates to a fourth character: Rose's teenage son, Peter (Kodi Smit-McPhee). He comes to the ranch only in the movie's second act, introducing an entirely different, maybe modern presence to the drama. Peter is a slender beanpole who dresses in black and white and — gasp — sneakers, and crafts fragile flowers out of paper. Phil, who conceals his homosexuality, takes Peter under his wing, an almost unfathomable development poised somewhere between horror (that Phil's hard lessons will only set up the seemingly delicate Peter for slaughter) and tenderness. Cumberbatch, so alive to his character's contradictions, and Smit-McPhee, with a bracingly singular demeanor and a sly strength, artfully play both possibilities.

Against a grand backdrop, "The Power of the Dog" fluctuates with evolving power dynamics that seem to almost seize the movie, itself. Campion's film can feel unbalanced, with its primary characters often paired or isolated but seldom all together despite the chamber piece setup. (George especially fades from view.) And as richly drawn as the movie is, the ending comes almost too quick. "The Power of the Dog" may in the end be more a twisty psychological thriller than a transcendent frontier epic. But the film's shape-shifting transformation is also part of its ruthless finesse.

"The Power of the Dog," a Netflix release, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association of America for brief sexual content/full nudity. Running time: 126 minutes. Three and a half stars out of four. (AP)

PARIS: Twelve people will stand trial in Paris over a \$10 million jewelry heist targeting Kim Kardashian West in 2016, authorities said Friday.

The reality TV star said she was tied up at gunpoint and locked in a bathroom after armed robbers forced their way into her rented Paris apartment during fashion week.

After five years of investigation, investigating judges have ordered the case sent to trial, a judicial official said Friday. The 12 suspects face a range of charges related to the theft. No trial date has been set, and the official would not provide further details.

Kardashian West's French lawyer did not immediately comment.

Several suspects have been released from jail pending trial for health reasons, including 68-year-old Yunique Abbas, one of the five men accused of carrying out the heist itself, who published a book about it last year.

The alleged mastermind, Aomar Ait Khedache, wrote Kardashian West an apology letter from his prison cell, saying he regrets his actions and realizes the psychological damage he caused.

At the time, a spokeswoman for Kardashian West said she was badly shaken but physically unharmed. (AP)

LOS ANGELES: The 53rd NAACP Image Awards will be held in-person Feb. 26 in Los Angeles with a live audience, the group announced.

The ceremony starts at 8 pm Eastern and will be broadcast live on BET.

Nominees for the awards that honor entertainers and writers of color will be announced Jan. 11. This year's honors include new podcast categories along with awards in music, film, television and literature.

No venue or host was announced. Earlier this year, Anthony Anderson was host for the eighth straight year in a virtual ceremony with no audience.

The late Chadwick Boseman won best actor in a motion picture for his final role in "Ma Rainey's Black Bottom" and won best supporting actor for his performance in "Da 5 Bloods." (AP)

NEW YORK: It was the Meghan hour on the talk show of her friend, Ellen DeGeneres, as the Duchess of Sussex helped welcome a special guest, hit the studio lot to prank vendors and said she'll be cooking Thanksgiving dinner herself.

"I love to cook. We'll be home and just sort of relax and settle



DeGeneres



Meghan

in," Meghan said of her second Thanksgiving in California with Prince Harry and, now, their two kids.

Meghan and DeGeneres, who met at a pet store more than a decade ago, chatted about Halloween (Archie was a dinosaur and baby Lili a skunk), and more serious issues like Meghan's work to push

for federal paid family leave. And she said Harry has taken nicely to the California lifestyle in Montecito, where Ellen is one of their neighbors.

"He loves it," Meghan said. "We're just happy."

Meghan got Ellen-style goofy when she donned an earpiece so Ellen could tell her what to say

and do as she perused the wares of three vendors on the studio lot. Meghan mewed in cat ears, devoured hot sauce on crackers like a chipmunk and held a huge crystal to her face — all after a pretend assistant told the trio of sellers to treat her just like everybody else. They could barely keep from laughing. (AP)

Features

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