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ON SCREEN

THE BLADE, TOLEDO, OHIO ■ THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 22 ■ SECTION E, Pages 14, 15

DVDS

Shining a spotlight on Tom Petty

By ROD LOCKWOOD
BLADE STAFF WRITER

It doesn't take four hours to figure out Tom Petty.

Everything anyone needs to know about the man is tucked neatly into a few deliciously tense moments in the Peter Bogdanovich-directed Petty doc *Runnin' Down A Dream*, which really does clock in at just under 240 minutes.

It's a rare peek into the sleazy morass of the recording industry that someone captured on film years ago. Petty's in a studio with one of his most important influences, Roger McGuinn of The Byrds, who is working on a solo album. The control room is tight and claustrophobic, and there's a youngish record company executive there telling McGuinn he has written him a song that should be recorded for the release.

Petty looks at the song and immediately dismisses it as not worthy of McGuinn's standards. He's droll and derisive, reading some of the lyrics out loud and sneering at them. "I could smoke a joint and write three lines better than that," he says.

Then he turns on the record company man, who tries halfheartedly to defend his work against one of America's greatest singer/songwriters. McGuinn is laughing nervously as Petty stands over the other guy, tells him that he's "very suspicious" of his motives and accuses him of getting "points," — i.e. a kickback from the record company — if the song gets on the album. Petty doesn't back down, of course, and McGuinn agrees not to record the song.

The older musician's lack of confidence — it's obvious that he would have dutifully recorded the song if

Petty hadn't been around and he pretty much says so later — makes you squirm. You mean artists like Roger McGuinn really let some callow corporate shill tell him what songs he's going to record?

But most importantly, Petty's staunch defense of his friend and willingness to create a scene on his behalf define in a few awkward, nervous minutes what Bogdanovich explores in detail throughout the documentary: Petty is a fearless defender of his own integrity and that of anyone with whom he's associated and he's put his career on the line more than a few times to prove a point.

"They were trying to make the artist into something he wasn't in order to sell him a certain way," Petty says years later, summing up a decades-long battle that he always wins, either as a solo artist or with his longtime band the Heartbreakers.

Runnin' Down A Dream, which includes a full-length concert and a CD of musical rarities, was born when Petty's management team wanted to do something more than just a 30th anniversary concert in Gainesville,

Fla., where the proto-Heartbreakers first started playing as Mudcrutch. Through a series of connections, Bogdanovich — the director of *The Last Picture Show*, *Paper Moon*, and *Mask* — was brought in to put the film project together.

Taking advantage of hundreds of hours of archival material that band members shot early in their career, concert footage (including some great stuff with Bob Dylan when Petty and The Heartbreakers backed him that begs to be re-

See PETTY, Page 28



Tom Petty.
ASSOCIATED PRESS

MOVIE GUIDE

OPENING THIS WEEK

Reviewed yesterday

● **August Rush.** A prodigy, abandoned at birth, uses his music to try to find his parents. PG; 113 min. (CDEP, CDM, SLC)

● **Before the Devil Knows You're Dead.** A tale of greed, infidelity, and murder from director Sidney Lumet. R; 117 min. (Sup)

● **Enchanted.** The fairy-tale world and the real world collide in this half-animated, half live-action family film. PG; 107 min. (CDEP, CDM, Fox, SLC)

● **Hitman.** The video game

about a genetically engineered assassin leaps to the big screen. R; 93 min. (CDEP, CDM, SLC)

● **The Mist.** Stephen King's tale of horrifying and deadly creatures that show up the day after a mysterious storm sweeps a small town. R; 127 min. (CDEP, CDM, SLC)

● **No Country for Old Men.** When a man finds \$2 million, a load of heroin, and a lot of dead bodies, he becomes the target of a ruthless killer. R; 102 min. (CDEP, CDM)

● **This Christmas.** For the first time in four years, family members gather for Christmas, complete with gifts and emotional baggage. PG-13; 119 min. (CDEP, CDM, SLC)

Movie summaries are condensed from Blade reviews and reflect the theater schedule starting tomorrow. Films are rated on a scale of 5 stars (best) to Bomb (worst). The reviewer's name, movie running time, and abbreviations of the theaters where the movie is playing are at the end of each summary.

American Gangster. Denzel Washington plays a real-life Harlem crime lord who revolutionized the sale of heroin in the early '70s. Russell Crowe plays the cop who brought him down. Well acted, but oddly thin for such a

sweeping epic. R ★★ ★ 160 min. (Borrelli) (CDEP, CDM, SLC)

The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford. Brad Pitt stars as the legendary outlaw, Casey Affleck is his fate — quite literally, he has the glow of approaching doom in this often breathtaking, but slow, western about celebrity and myth. Patience is rewarded. R ★★ ★ ★ 160 min. (Borrelli) (Sup)

Bea Movie. Jerry Seinfeld returns, in cartoon form, as a bee who files a lawsuit against mankind for the theft of

honey. Slight, chipper, and you've seen it all before. PG ★★ ★ 90 min. (Borrelli) (CDEP, CDM, Fox, SLC)

Bella. The "New York moments" make this tale of a waitress grappling with an unwanted pregnancy an engaging failure. PG-13 ★★ ★ 110 min. (Wire review) (CDM)

Beowulf. Arguably mankind's first big dumb action flick. Director Robert Zemeckis, using the animation technique used on *The Polar Express*, renders a creepy digital cast of famous faces, including Angelina Jolie as a demon. The film is soulless but the 3-D effects are incredible. PG-13 ★★ ★ 113 min. (Borrelli) (CDEP, CDM, SLC)

Dan in Real Life. Steve Carell plays a newspaper advice columnist and new widower with three daughters. Much to his shock, he finds an intense bond with the new girlfriend (Juliette Binoche) of his brother (Dana Cook). A sweet, low-impact charm pervades. PG-13 ★★ ★ 95 min. (Borrelli) (CDEP, CDM, SLC)

The Darjeeling Limited. Wes Anderson's latest live dollhouse is a sometimes tedious, more often relaxing travelogue across a storybook India, with Owen Wilson, Jason Schwartzman, and Adrian Brody as estranged brothers attempting to bond. R ★★ ★ 91 min. (Borrelli) (Sup)

Fred Claus. Vince Vaughn plays the bad-seed brother of Paul Giamatti's Jolly Old Elf. The plot holds promise, but the end result moves on autopilot: fraudulent and full of unearned heartwarming moments that can make the skin crawl. PG ★★ ★ 116 min. (Borrelli) (CDEP, CDM, Fox, SLC)



NEW LINE CINEMA
John Travolta in *Hairspray*.

Hairspray. John Waters' 1988 film comes around again as a movie adaptation of the musical adaptation of the original movie, and the results are ridiculously entertaining. PG ★★ ★ ★ 89 min. (Borrelli) (Mau, Sup)

The Heartbreak Kid. A timid, though not unpleasant, remake of the 1972 Neil Simon-Elaine May comedy about a newlywed (Ben Stiller, in this one) who falls for a now girl, while on his honeymoon. The plot is cringe-worthy, but in the hands of the Farrelly Brothers, it still produces chuckles. PG ★★ ★ 110 min. (Borrelli) (Sup)

Into the Wild. Sean Penn's lyrical ode to the open road, to youthful idealism, and plowing your own path. Emilio Hirsch stars as a recent college graduate who sets out for the Alaskan back country. The film takes pains to poke holes in that idealism, only reinforcing it. Based on the book from Jon Krakauer. R ★★ ★ ★ 111 min. (Borrelli) (Sup)

Lars and the Real Girl. Ryan Gosling plays a loner who falls for a life-size sex doll. But don't hold that against the movie. What sounds like a one-note joke becomes a well-acted, moving appeal for compassionate understanding. PG-13 ★★ ★ ★ 108 min. (Borrelli) (Sup)

The Life of Brian. The Monty Python crew's irreverent 1979 film about the "savior" born in a manger just down the street from Jesus' manger. R ★★ ★ ★ 93 min. (Wire review) (Mau)

Lions for Lambs. Tom Cruise, Robert Redford, and Meryl Streep star in a film about America's war on terror. The earnest film is filled with geopolitical issues, but it's so leaden, it's like a laminated editorial. R ★★ 88 min. (Borrelli) (SLC)

Love in the Time of Cholera. Mike Newell's adaptation of the Gabriel Garcia Marquez novel. A tale of undying love, originally told in a very distinctive voice, this version will strike audiences as romantic and others as a lost opportunity. Javier Bardem leads a talented roster awash in miscasting. R ★★ 138 min. (Borrelli) (Sup)

Mr. Magorium's Wonder Emporium. The lovely moments are plentiful but the marvels are minor in this tale of an aging toy impresario (Dustin Hoffman) who wants to hand over his shop to his favorite employee (Natalie Portman). G ★★ ★ 93 min. (Wire review) (CDEP, CDM, Fox, SLC)

Monty Python and the Holy Grail. In this 1974 comedy, the Monty Python crew spoofs the King Arthur legend. PG ★★ ★ ★ 90 min. (Wire review) (Mau)

P2. A miscast, misdirected batch of a can't miss plot that centers on a woman (Rachel Nichols) becoming the target of an unhinged security guard (Wes Bentley) in an empty parking garage. R ★ 98 min. (Wire review) (Sup)

Ratatouille. The third film from Brad Bird, the inventive master behind *The Incredibles*, is not really for kids, not really for adults. It is, instead, for those who love food, who dream of it. Remy the rat is a born chef, but being a rat, some dreams are complicated. G ★★ ★ ★ 111 min. (Borrelli) (Sup)

Saw IV. It's called "torture porn," this genre where we watch people strapped to this, nailed to that, faced with the ugliest choices you can imagine. The Saw franchise used to have an alleged moral component, but now it's all about the gore. R ★ 108 min. (Wire review) (CDEP, CDM,)

Superbad. The most accurate depiction of high school life since *American Graffiti*. A pair of friends at the end of their senior year try to score liquor for a couple of female hotties — that's the nominal plot. The real subject is the fright of looming adulthood. From the same guys behind *Knocked Up*. R ★★ ★ ★ 114 min. (Borrelli) (Sup)

30 Days of Night. Clever idea. Vampires converge on Barrow, Alaska, which has no daylight for 30 straight days each year. Stunning visuals. R ★★ ★ 113 min. (Borrelli) (Sup)

Theater Codes

CDEP: Cinema De Lux
Franklin Park, 5001 Monroe St.; 419-891-5039.

CDM: Cinema De Lux
Maumee, 1360 Conant St.; 419-891-5039.

Fox: Fox theaters, in the
Woodville Mall; 419-693-8922.
Mau: Maumee Indoor Theater, 1360 Conant St., Maumee; 419-897-8901.

SLC: Showcase Levis Commons, State Rt. 25 and I-475, Perrysburg; 419-891-5039.

Sup: Super Cinemas, Spring Meadows Shopping Center; 419-891-5039.

KEY TO RATINGS
G: GENERAL AUDIENCES:
All ages admitted.

PG: PARENTAL GUIDANCE SUGGESTED. Some material may not be suitable for children.
PG-13: PARENTS STRONGLY CAUTIONED. Some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.

R: RESTRICTED. Under 17 requires youth to be accompanied by parent or adult guardian.
NC-17: No one 17 and under admitted.

For complete movie reviews, listings, theaters, and show times, visit toledoblade.com/movies.

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SATURDAYS IN THE BLADE

Petty bandmate protests exclusion

By BILL DeYOUNG

STUART (FLA.) NEWS

In Peter Bogdanovich's documentary *Runnin' Down a Dream*, Tom Petty goes from a hungry and ambitious Florida teen to international rock icon.

The four-hour film, just released on DVD, and the coffee-table book that accompanies it, relates the story of Petty and the many musicians who have played with him over the past four decades. The tale is told by the star himself along with dozens of present and former band members, business associates, and famous admirers.

Danny Roberts is nowhere to be found. A singer/guitarist with Mudcrutch, the Gainesville, Fla., group that evolved into the Heartbreakers, Roberts spent three years with Petty and company; they were the best of friends and obsessed with making the big time.

Roberts performed on every recording that brought the group to the attention of the Los Angeles music industry and even drove the 1969 Volkswagen van that got them there. They performed many of his compositions. He signed the first con-

tracts and played hundreds of shows as part of Mudcrutch. He sings and plays bass on the only single the group ever released.

There's a famous photo, circa 1974, of the band in this period. It appears in "Runnin' Down a Dream," but Roberts has been airbrushed out.

The Mudcrutch saga takes up Roberts sings and plays bass on the only single Mudcrutch ever released

much of the film's first hour.

"I try not to be bitter, but I can't but be a little hurt by such an intentional snub," said Roberts, 55, who is back playing in Florida bars. "I somehow thought Tom was bigger than that."

Mudcrutch broke up in 1975, without finishing an album. Roberts moved back home to Florida, while Petty and the others remained in California to pick up the pieces.

"They asked me to come back 15 to 20 times," Roberts said, "every day for a while. They're hired another guy from Florida to play

bass, but it didn't work out."

He did head west again and spent several years playing with New Wave pioneer Phil Seymour. Petty had reformed his group and renamed it the Heartbreakers.

In a statement, Bogdanovich cited the documentary's epic running time as the reason for Roberts' exclusion. "We could not possibly encompass every single twist and turn, nor every person who came and went along the way," the filmmaker said.

"I am sorry Mr. Roberts feels slighted, and can understand his feelings, but we had to keep the viewers' attention-span in mind, and he was not essential to the journey we were depicting ... Nothing personal."

Roberts hasn't seen or heard from his old friends for 20 years.

He says he doesn't want money; he received a hefty royalty check for the Mudcrutch tracks included on the 1995 Petty anthology "Playback."

"I want acknowledgement of my input and my contributions," Roberts said. "I was there. It wouldn't have happened as it happened without my participation."

Petty

Continued from Page 14

leased as its own DVD), and talking head interviews, the director was able to piece together a definitive portrait of the artist.

As a songwriter with an unerring knack for composing tight, catchy pop-rock songs like "Break-

down," "Don't Come Around Here No More," "I Won't Back Down," "Free Fallin'," and "Refugee," "American Girl," and countless others, Petty's only real peer is Bruce Springsteen. They also share a high-minded sense of integrity and the ability

to intuitively make decisions that pay off musically.

Petty was a band leader from the very beginning, convincing his long-time collaborator guitarist Mike Campbell to forgo a college education to join him in a rock and roll band. He did the same with pianist Benmont Tench, forming the core of The Heartbreakers.

Runnin' Down a Dream traces their career in chronological order and the archival footage pays off because there is plenty of old film of the band piling into a van to go to California, hanging out in dive hotels, and playing early gigs. It's rare stuff, but it's also somewhat predictable: Who hasn't seen footage of young hippie-looking dudes tossing Frisbees and clowning around in the '70s?

The documentary begins to take on a deeper tone when Petty talks about his upbringing, noting that even though he grew up in rural Florida he never had a southern accent. He had a horrible relationship with his father, who he said was abusive, and was extremely close to his mom, a dynamic that gave him an intense ambition to succeed, coupled with a sensitivity to anything he perceived as an injustice.

So when he was stuck with a bad record deal, he marched into the record company and

told them that if he couldn't get out of it, he'd just stop making music. And he meant it, which led to a drawn-out legal fight that he eventually won. When he was reaching the height of his popularity with the Heartbreakers and his record company decided to sell his new album for a then unheard-of \$9.98, he refused to give them the songs, going so far as to have them taken out of the studio everyday and hidden so that even he wouldn't know where they were.

"They were using our own popularity to raise profitability across the board," he says in the documentary.

His career took a number of turns and over time he played with Dylan, formed the Traveling

Wilburys with George Harrison, Jeff Lynne, Dylan, and Roy Orbison, and worked with Johnny Cash, all the while churning out successful albums.

Runnin' Down a Dream's strength is Petty himself. With no voice-over narration, Bogdanovich lets the interview subjects move the story along. There's Campbell and Tench, of course, but also Pearl Jam's Eddie Vedder, the Foo Fighters' Dave Grohl, a number of managers and other former band members, and even the late George Harrison in footage filmed years ago. (There's no Dylan, unfortunately.)

Petty has a wry, intelligent sense of humor, conveying a nice balance of self-deprecating humor without any false modesty. Clearly he's a musician who knows exactly what he's doing, a natural leader, and an artist with a sense of his own history. Over Bogdanovich's four hours that point is clear, through the music as well as the interviews. Perhaps it's for hard-core fans only, but as a document of the artist as a young and now middle-aged man, *Runnin' Down a Dream* never loses its focus.

(The DVD is being sold exclusively through Best Buy stores.)

Contact Rod Lockwood at: rlockwood@theblade.com or 419-724-6159.

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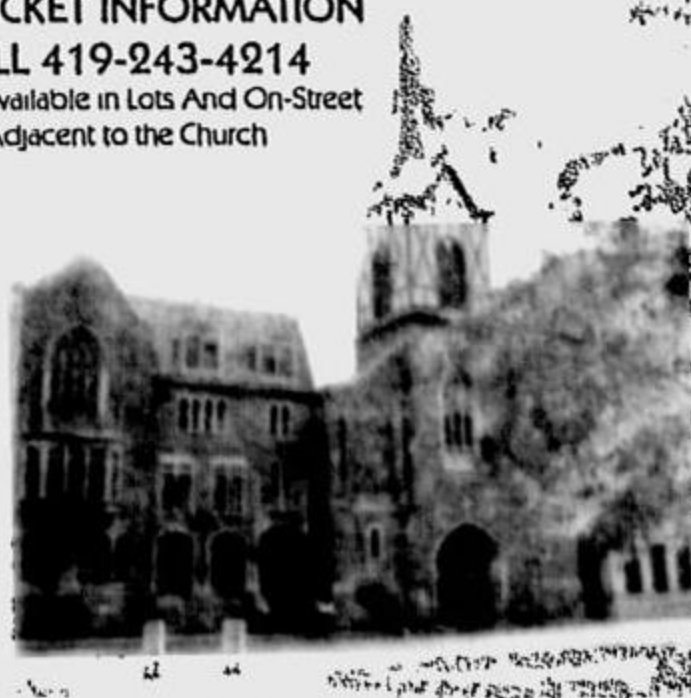
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