

Arts & Entertainment

Stones' unique stage presence alive on concert film

By Steve Abariotes

One quality of the Rolling Stones is their ability to appear as if they are going through the motions while simultaneously giving the impression that, at times, they are not quite sure what they are doing. In Hal Ashby's "Let's Spend The Night Together," this is about the only inquiry into the ambiguities of this historically dubious band.

The Rolling Stones 1981 concert tour was the premiere rock act of the year, if not the entertainment event of the season. "Let's Spend The Night Together" (originally titled "Rocks Off") catches a good deal of the energy of two Rolling Stones concerts, one shot at the



Mick Jagger

Meadowlands in New Jersey, the other at Sun Devil stadium in Tempe, Ariz. The film is cross-cut between the two shows, beginning with the fading light of a desert sunset revealing an absolutely sold-out Sun Devil Stadium, and the sight is quite stunning.

The film is beautifully shot and well-edited, capturing the essence of Mick Jagger's pretty/ugly stage presence. His serpentine style is still true to form, while prancing and dancing, daring the cameras to keep up.

"LSTNT" does not set any new filmic conventions, neither as a film nor a concert film. But rarely these days does a Hollywood film set any artistic precedence, for it is the star quality that matters most (in a Hollywood film), this film obviously being no exception.

The trips backstage are few, sporadic and without reason, and show Jagger and guitarist Ron Wood warming up by getting some makeup and imbibing in a little liquid inspiration. Some questionable detours are taken, such as a sped-up set-up of the revolving indoor stage to the sounds of "Going To A Go-Go," which is boring and too long. A shot of starving children in bad taste, without a point, comes out of nowhere in the laziest attempt a film has made to identify with some period of the past. The selection of the cutaways, other than those of the concert, seems to have been done as an afterthought, but does not take away from the show.

Ironically, the music is one of the best reasons to see this film, considering the actual crowd in attendance seemed primarily satisfied with a live look at the Stones, music second. Nearly all the classics are performed, both past and present, with excellent versions of



Mick Jagger and Keith Richards revel on stage during a show from the Stones' 1981 tour of the Americas.

"Jumpin' Jack Flash," "Neighbors" and "Little T and A", the latter being crooned in "the fuck me honey drawl" of Keith Richards. Richards stalks the stage in his mangy, menacing style, tugging at his guitar strings as if he were starting a chain saw, and at times appears to be in a world of his own, as detached from the scene as his wireless guitar is detached from the sound system. Yet he plays masterfully when he does play.

Given Jagger's antics and presence, some of the more memorable moments

are due to Wood, whose instant improvisations help balance out the performance.

At one point, about 50 "Honky Tonk Women" grace the stage, and Jagger outdances them all. The Stones' live shows resemble a circus and "Let's Spend The Night Together" captures the full production. The Stones have also become a slick act and, maybe, even respectable.

The film was recorded in 24-track sound but is unfortunately running at the Plaza 4, where it is playing at insufficient volume.

2 free studs may ease pain of \$25 ticket and no Valentine

Juliet had just gotten her hair trimmed. She drove through downtown in her \$350 army surplus tank (a 1970 Kingswood station wagon with yellow rust-prevention spots, a yellow fender, and a 166,000 miles reading on the front panel).

Juliet couldn't wait to arrive home. There, in her mail box, she knew the Valentine or, perhaps even Valentines,



T. Marni Vos

that had not arrived on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday would surely find her, Friday, at this very moment, be awaiting her. The Valentine from, from, from anyone . . . who cares . . . just a Valentine.

Juliet looked under her fingernails. . . cheese, lettuce, tomatoes . . . she smelled like onions . . . she thought to herself that maybe next year she could stop suffering for her art. She would be out of the restaurant grind, she would have a different job — but probably not. She smiled.

In the rear view, a car moved closer and closer. Juliet watched as the trailer followed her across the intersection. The street lights flooded the night and Juliet saw the red cherries of a police car reflect in the darkness.

Juliet panicked. Was it the one headlight, the lack of turn signals, was she speeding? No, that wasn't possible — the license, it had to be the license plate — they were 4 months old — maybe five . . . six?

This was the perfect time to turn right. Juliet turned right. The police car turned right. Juliet turned left. The police car turned left. Juliet tried to

outrun the police car — the station wagon died. The red lights went on. Juliet felt ill.

"Did you know your license plates are expired?"

"My license plates?"

"They were expired in October."

"October?"

"Of '82."

Trying to be casual: "Do you guys put real bullets in your guns?"

"Could I see your license and registration, please?"

"Well, you already saw my license."

A feeble laugh.

"I was just kidding — joke — joke — OK, my license and registration."

Juliet fumbled through the glove compartment . . . a mint, a window-scraper, ketchup, Kleenex and a registration — license out of the purse.

"Here you are."

"Did you know you had improper registration?"

"Well, yeah, kind of. I've been waiting for my withholding tax — I've been waiting, UNL's been waiting, the gas company, my sister — everyone's waiting for my withholding tax."

"Well, here is your license and registration and ticket. The ticket will cost you \$25 and you have 15 days to renew your plates and registration."

"Thank you?"

"Drive carefully, one of your headlights is out."

"Goodnight."

Juliet arrives home. Someone must have rummaged through her mailbox, taken the Valentine's and left the phone bill . . . well, maybe next year.

In the meantime, Juliet recalled a sign in a downtown jewelry store window — two free studs with every ear piercing . . . who, in this day and age, could pass up a bargain like that. She smiled.

A. A. Milne's Winnie-the-Pooh: Foremost Western spokesbear of Eastern Taoist thought

The Tao of Pooh
Benjamin Hoff
Dutton

*A fly can't bird, but a bird can fly.
A fish can't whistle and neither can I.
Ask me a riddle and I reply:
Cottleston, Cottleston, Cottleston Pie.
Winnie-the-Pooh*

Christopher Robin and Winnie-the-Pooh, in the last scene of A.A. Milne's classic series, were out walking on a sunny, hummy sort of day.

Where were they going? Pooh asked. Nowhere, Christopher Robin said. It sounded like an agreeable place, and they headed there.

What was Pooh's favorite thing to do? Christopher Robin asked. Pooh pondered and said what he liked doing best was being offered honey at a friend's house. Christopher Robin said his favorite thing to do was nothing. Pooh agreed that was a good thing to do.

They came to an enchanted place at the top of the forest. The spaces between the trees, like nowhere else, were not cluttered with underbrush. E.H. Shepard's last illustration depicts the bear sitting peacefully under a tree, the world spread below him, as if he had found Tao.

Taoism is implicit throughout the Pooh series, Benjamin Hoff points out in a fun little book called *The Tao of Pooh*. Hoff contends Pooh is the foremost Western spokesbear of Eastern philosophy.

Tao is an ancient Chinese term meaning "the way," as in the way to right living and inner attainment, the way of the

universe. Centuries later, Buddha borrowed much of his philosophy from Taoist thought.

Pooh, spelled *pu*, is another ancient term. It is a central image in the premiere piece of Taoist literature, circa 200 B.C., *Tao Te Ching (The Way and Virtue)* by Lao Tzu (Old Man).

The modern Chinese dictionary translates *pu* as "natural, simple, plain and honest." In ancient texts, it is translated as "the uncarved block." The Chinese character is composed of two radicals and translates literally as "wood uncut."

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THE TAO OF
POOH



Benjamin Hoff