

SHUT UP AND PLAY THE HITS



THE FINAL DAYS OF LCD SOUNDSYSTEM



Festival Screenings:

Sunday, January 22, midnight Location: Egyptian Theater, Park City
Monday, January 23, 9:45pm Location: Broadway Center Cinema 3, SLC
Wednesday, January 25, 11:30pm Location: Prospector Square Theater, Park City
Friday, January 27, 10:00pm Location: Redstone Cinema 7, Park City
Saturday, January 28, 9:45pm Location: Broadway Center Cinema 3, SLC

Press & Industry Screening:

Wednesday, January 25, 4:30pm Location: Holiday Village Cinema 4

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Synopsis

On April 2nd 2011, LCD Soundsystem played its final show at Madison Square Garden. LCD frontman James Murphy had made the conscious decision to disband one of the most celebrated and influential bands of its generation at the peak of its popularity, ensuring that the band would go out on top with the biggest and most ambitious concert of its career. The instantly sold out, near four-hour extravaganza did just that, moving the thousands in attendance to tears of joy and grief, with NEW YORK magazine calling the event “a marvel of pure craft” and TIME magazine lamenting “we may never dance again.” SHUT UP AND PLAY THE HITS is both a narrative film documenting this once in a life time performance and an intimate portrait of James Murphy as he navigates the lead-up to the show, the day after, and the personal and professional ramifications of his decision.

Director’s Statement

SHUT UP AND PLAY THE HITS isn’t the film we imagined we would be making when we first approached James Murphy with the idea of doing a project together in the summer of 2010.

Although the decision to end LCD Soundsystem had been made and the final album had been out for a couple of months, there had been no talk of a farewell show at Madison Square Garden. We had no inkling of the way the band would bow out and hadn’t, at that stage, given much thought to the huge change the band’s leader was planning to make to his life.

Our initial meeting came about as we were interested in James as a character, not just as a musician, but also as a figure who represented a certain aspect of contemporary popular culture. We were interested in the very specific type of fame he had achieved in the short ten year history of his band. Not quite a household name but known to those in the know. We were drawn to the fact that he had started the band and come to prominence at the relatively late age of thirty, had achieved success on his own terms, and now in early middle age at a point where the band had never been more popular, was quitting and walking away from it all.

We’d recently directed another music film, that was released earlier that year, NO DISTANCE LEFT TO RUN, which chronicled the career, disintegration and recent reunion of the English band Blur. We were keen to sink our teeth into another project, and had kicked about a number of documentary ideas. but weren’t really sure if we wanted to do another music film - there only seem to be a limited number of stories to tell, and the whole band start/achieve success/fall out over drugs/women/egos seemed a well-trodden path.

But there was something about James and LCD that really appealed as a story. It seemed to be the antithesis of the cliché - here was a band full of people who still liked each other, whose relationships hadn’t disintegrated, who were still making great music, who hadn’t burnt out, but had made the decision to quit calmly and quietly. The question of ‘why?’ seemed like a great starting point for our story. It was a decision that seemed typical of James and his idiosyncratic approach to his work.

Shortly after our first meeting, James told us about the possibility of a final show being played at Madison Square Garden. The news immediately added a whole new dimension to our plans for the film. We knew that as one of the best live bands in the world, this was an important opportunity to also capture a really special event. We had a very specific approach in mind in filming the last concert—to authentically record that very specific moment in time, rather than just “tape a show.” Having worked with LCD before, Spike Jonze offered himself up as part of the team, and captured some amazing moments. Through the narrative use of the cameras we were able to reveal the relationships between band members, the relationship between the audience and the band, and the emotion on everyone’s face as they realized this was the final time any of the songs would be played live. We knew immediately that by capturing the show this way, it would help the narrative, heightening the comparison between James Murphy’s ascent to stardom and his life after LCD Soundsystem played their final show.

The decision to structure the film with cuts between both the concert and the day after came from a desire to explore the reasons behind, and the ramifications of James’ decision to end LCD. Our thought was that seeing James adjusting to the first day of his post LCD life was a good position from which to explore some of the ideas in the narrative. In essence it was a way of dissecting his decision as he faced up to the first day of supposedly normal life. The aim was to contrast the figure of James Murphy the musician on stage playing a huge show at an iconic venue with the figure of James Murphy, the guy who has to take his dog to the end of the street to pee, or answer his emails.

It was our intention to make a film that explored some of the possible reasons James Murphy had for quitting, and in doing so, make a film that both chronicled the end of a band and also tapped into James’ personal experience to reveal universal ideas about age and the decisions we make about our lives.

- Dylan Southern and Will Lovelace



A conversation with Directors Dylan Southern & Will Lovelace

What inspired you to make this film?

Our first film was a music documentary, “No Distance Left to Run,” which charted the history, disintegration and eventual reunion of the British band, Blur. It was well received by fans and non-fans alike, and was even nominated for a Grammy. Having completed that project, we were fairly certain that our next film would not be another music film. There were other stories we were interested in telling. We kicked around and began researching a number of other ideas, but then we got the opportunity to meet with James Murphy. We were fans of the band and found James interesting as a character, but as we got further into the idea of the film, the thing that fascinated us the most was the fact that he had very calmly made the decision to end his band at the height of its success. It seemed like such a counter-intuitive decision, but also very typical of him and his approach to his work and life.

This is a story about man’s journey after his decision to leave one life behind. How did you find the narrative?

The narrative seemed obvious. The decision to end a band just as it was reaching the pinnacle of its success was such a bold one, executed in such an understated way, that it was fascinating to us. Most bands eventually disintegrate, whether through falling out over girls, drugs or whatever. But here were a group of people who were still very much friends, who were still making great music, who had very calmly decided to call it a day. And so we wanted the narrative to explore what went into making this counterintuitive decision to walk away from it all and its repercussions.



How did you meet James Murphy, and what initially interested you about filming their last show at MSG?

We met James through a mutual friend, and had a bunch of conversations back and forth, our original intention was to make a much more conventional documentary, but I guess what we ended up making is much more of a hybrid, part concert film, part documentary, part narrative. When we first met James, the end of the band had been announced and the last record was already on the shelves—but the decision to play the final show at Madison Square Garden had not been made. When we heard that the show was happening we knew that it would be a very important part of the film we were making. It was an opportunity to capture the most important show in the band's history so we wanted to do it right. So many shows seem to be shot in the same way and we wanted to capture Madison Square Garden in a way that avoided the formulaic camera positions, techno-cranes etc. We wanted to shoot the show in the spirit of the concert films that we love, and to make a film that was more a document of a moment in time than a 'taping of a show'. We assembled a team who we had worked with or admired, Spike Jonze even operated one of the cameras, which was amazing.



What was the biggest thing revealed about James Murphy while making this film that you did not already know?

He is a huge fan of Ultimate Fighting.

What do you want people to take from this film?

Firstly, we hope people have a really good time. We were lucky to capture a really amazing performance and it's a pretty visceral experience. We had great fun in the sound mix with James, making sure the music sounded as amazing and as LOUD as it could—so there's that aspect of it. Our hope is that those who couldn't be there have the chance to experience the show.

But we also hope the film works as more than just a concert film. The last show was quite an emotional experience for all involved and should be for the audience too. As well as being a music film, it taps into some more universal ideas about age and the decisions we make in our lives. It also looks at the relationship between fans and bands, from James as a young kid listening to Bowie and Lou Reed, to one of the most enduring images for us—the final shot of an inconsolable young fan who is one of the last to leave the arena.



Bios

Dylan Southern & Will Lovelace

Southern and Lovelace make up the directing partnership, thirtytwo. In 2011, the duo theatrically released their feature-length documentary, “No Distance Left to Run,” which received a nomination for Best Long Form Music Video at the 53rd annual Grammy® Awards and was shortlisted for a prestigious Grierson Documentary Award. An intimate portrait of the British band, Blur, the film told their definitive story and was shot during the famed 2009 triumphant reunion tour. The film received critical acclaim, for its “gorgeous live shots” (Vulture) and “tremendous insights about the internal psychological dynamics of the band” (The Guardian).

Together, their work has spanned commercials, music videos, live music and feature documentaries. The duo has worked with numerous artists including Elbow, Franz Ferdinand, Arctic Monkeys, The Kills, The Fall, Richard Hawley, Jack White, Lemmy and Bjork.

Lucas Ochoa – Producer

Lucas Ochoa most recently produced the critically acclaimed feature documentary “No Distance Left to Run,” which had an international theatrical release in 2010. The film told the story of the British band, Blur, and was filmed during their reunion tour in 2009. The documentary received a Grammy® nomination and was also shortlisted for a Grierson. Ochoa is currently in production on the drama-documentary, “Who Is Dayani Cristal” starring Gael Garcia Bernal. The film uncovers the story behind an anonymous body bearing a tattoo that reads “Dayani Cristal” which is found in the Arizona desert along the U.S.A - Mexican border.

Previously, Ochoa executive produced the documentary, “Look Back, Don’t Stare”. Ochoa was also an associate producer on “Car Bomb” (C4), a documentary exploring how asymmetric warfare is redefining conflict in the 21st century. His additional credits include, “Werewolves Across America” and “Cult of the Suicide Bomber III” (C4).

Thomas Benski - Producer

Thomas Benski is the CEO of Pulse Films, a talent management and integrated content production company that creates content across different platforms. Alongside Ochoa, Benski most recently produced the Grammy® nominated and Grierson short-listed documentary “No Distance Left to Run,” and is currently in production on the drama-documentary “Who Is Dayani Cristal” with Gael Garcia Bernal. Benski also led production on the feature length documentary, “Look Back, Don’t Stare” which was broadcast after the X-Factor in the UK and attracted an audience of 5 million. Additionally Benski has produced over 60 music videos and commercials, a dozen short films, four TV series and two feature films.

Bios

James Murphy - Producer

Though best known as the leader of the now-defunct LCD SOUNDSYSTEM, James Murphy has been active in various roles pre-dating, throughout and beyond the Grammy®-nominated LCD's existence. Long a fixture of the downtown NYC music scene, Mr. Murphy co-founded the DFA label, which released the LCD Soundsystem catalogue and whose current roster includes The Rapture, Holy Ghost!, YACHT, the Juan Maclean, Planningtorock and more. Murphy continues to operate out of DFA's West Village NYC offices, both as a principal in the label and as a producer/remixer at his infamous Plantain studios, housed in the DFA HQ. As a DJ, Murphy has toured the globe headlining clubs and festivals around the world, both on his own and, with fellow LCD veteran Patrick Mahoney, as 'SPECIALDISCOVERSION'. His DJ mixes for the likes of DFA, Colette and YSL (for whom he composes and performs show music) are renowned for their originality and verve. LCD SOUNDSYSTEM's legendary final show on April 2nd 2011 at New York's Madison Square Garden made headlines worldwide and marked a triumphant end to a band that had successfully carved its own unique niche within—or perhaps outside of—the modern music industry. During its 10-year existence, LCD SOUNDSYSTEM released three celebrated studio albums; 2005's LCD SOUNDSYSTEM; 2007's Sound Of Silver; and 2010's This Is Happening; along with remarkable standalone pieces like 45:33 and most recently The London Sessions. Murphy also provided the original soundtrack for the 2010 film Greenberg by acclaimed director Noah Baumbach.

Keith Wood - Executive Producer

Keith Wood was born in London in 1948. He attended art college in the Sixties specializing in performance based artworks which were radical in nature and used music (influenced by the Velvet Underground and John Cage) as an intrinsic part of the performance. After college in the Seventies he had numerous exhibitions of his visual works (mainly on paper) and ran an indie/experimental theatre group called 'Highway Shoes' based in Cardiff, Wales. Notable works were a trilogy of American hero pieces 'The Cassidy Variations' 'The Kid' and 'The Gospel According to Lenny' based on the lives and exploits of Neal Cassidy, Billy the Kid and Lenny Bruce respectively.

Wood moved to New York in 1981 and quickly became involved in the independent music scene. He ran Caroline Records, a record label and independent distributor and signed many artists to the label including The Smashing Pumpkins, Hole, White Zombie and Primus. In the Nineties Wood ran the Vernon Yard imprint for Virgin Records America releasing records by The Verve, Low and David Gray. He went on to reinvent the Caroline label as Astralwerks, releasing records by The Chemical Brothers and signing Fatboy Slim and Basement Jaxx.

In 2002 Wood ran Rough Trade Records America from the Chelsea Hotel, working with The Libertines and Belle and Sebastian, leaving in 2004 to form a small independent management company to help develop the activities of LCD Soundsystem, James Murphy and others.

Christine Vachon - Executive Producer

Independent Spirit Award and Gotham Award winner Christine Vachon co-founded indie powerhouse Killer Films in 1995 with producing partner Pamela Koffler. Based out of New York, Killer has produced more than 45 acclaimed independent films including Todd Haynes' Venice Film Festival Award-winning I'M NOT THERE and last year's Best Canadian Feature at TIFF, CAIRO TIME. Over the past decade and a half the two have produced some of the most celebrated American indie features including Academy Award-winning films FAR FROM HEAVEN, BOYS DON'T CRY, ONE HOUR PHOTO, HEDWIG AND THE ANGRY INCH, HAPPINESS and SAFE. In television, Vachon executive produced the Emmy-winning program, This American Life, for Showtime and more recently the two have collaborated on the upcoming miniseries Mildred Pierce for HBO. Killer Films was honored with a 10 year retrospective at the New York Museum of Modern Art in 2005.

The Creators Project - Executive Producer

The Creators Project, a global arts and technology initiative from Intel and VICE, acts as an executive producer for "Shut Up and Play the Hits," the upcoming film chronicling the aftermath of and lead-up to LCD Soundsystem's Madison Square Garden farewell show. As executive producer, The Creators Project, which regularly collaborates with an international roster of leading filmmakers, artists, musicians and designers, will bring the film to a global audience via its award-winning international event series in the United States, France, Brazil, South Korea and China. In addition, The Creators Project will release a series of exclusive editorial and video segments throughout the year on its video channel, TheCreatorsProject.com.

Launched in 2010, The Creators Project is an ongoing multi-year program that is dedicated to identifying leading artists and enabling them to showcase their works and artistic visions through technology and interactive media. The program includes The Studio, an international event series, a documentary TV series, multi-disciplinary collaborative projects and the video website, TheCreatorsProject.com. It has worked with such leading artists as Karen O, Hussein Chalayan, Anish Kapoor, Florence and the Machine, United Visual Artists, Feng Mengbo, Mark Ronson, Jonathan Glazer, Mick Rock, Barney Clay and David Bowie.

the
creators project
a partnership with Intel and Vice

Pulse Films

Founded in 2005 by Thomas Benski and Marisa Clifford, Pulse Films is a talent management and multidisciplinary production company creating content for Film, Television, Advertising, Music Video and Online.

Pulse's film department produces feature length documentary, drama-documentary and fiction. The company's most recent film productions include No Distance Left To Run, Look Back Don't Stare, Werewolves Across America, There Are No Innocent Bystanders and the forthcoming Who Is Dayani Cristal starring Gael Garcia Bernal.

The film department at Pulse is headed by Lucas Ochoa. Together Thomas Benski and Lucas Ochoa work as a producing partnership across all of Pulse's feature length projects.

www.pulsefilms.co.uk

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