

"Light of Day"
 Directed by Paul Schrader
 Starring Michael J. Fox, Joan Jett and Gena Rowlands

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There have been several great movies about real rock 'n' roll bands in real situations.

But, with the exception of Rob Reiner's rollicking "This Is Spinal Tap," there has never been a good movie about unreal rock 'n' roll bands in fictional, documentary or concert situations.

"Light of Day" combines all the bad aspects of why purely fictional rock 'n' roll movies fail — bad music, bad plot, bad direction and bad acting.

"Light of Day" stars Joan Jett and Michael J. Fox as Joe and Patti Rasnick, a brother and sister rock 'n' roll team. During the night they play with their band, the Barbusters, at various Cleveland bars. During the day Joe works at a sheet metal plant while Patti takes care of her 4-year-old, illegitimate son, Benji (Billy Sullivan).

Mother Jeanette Rasnick (Gena Rowlands) doesn't approve of her daughter's rock 'n' roll lifestyle. Joe tries to keep the family together but mother's religious fervor and daughter's rebelliousness are in

constant conflict. There is little chance that either party will forgive the other's stubbornness.

After a disastrous trip out on the road, the Barbusters split up. Joe goes back home to take care of Benji, Patti joins a Heavy Metal band called the Hunzz and the rest of the band goes back to their day jobs or other bands.

Mother Rasnick develops terminal cancer so, in a most predictable turn of the plot, Patti goes back to Cleveland and reconciles her differences with her mother. The Barbusters get back together and everything's peachy keen.

"Light of Day," with its religious-parent-doesn't-approve-of-offspring's-choice-to-make-music-plot, can trace its roots back to 1927 in Al Jolson's "The Jazz Singer." At least Jolson could sing.

Michael J. Fox has shown acting ability on television's "Family Ties" and in the film "Back to the Future," but his acting can't overcome the fact that he looks more like Wally Cleaver than a rock 'n' roll sheet metal worker. The only thing worse than Fox's guitar playing is Joan Jett's acting.

Three albums with the Blackhearts showed that Jett didn't have much to offer the music world. "Light of Day" shows that she doesn't have much to offer the movie world either. Her idea of acting is to look like she's mad at



Patti and Joe Rasnick (Joan Jett and Michael J. Fox) are siblings who leave behind their small-town, blue-collar life to play in a rock band.

the world throughout the entire film.

The music in the film is dreadful. The Barbusters crank through their sets with all the energy of Phil Collins playing a bar mitzvah. The title song, although written by Bruce Springsteen, sounds like a John Cafferty rip-off. Even the Fabulous Thunderbirds, one of the best bar bands in the world, come off looking like Wayne Newton in Vegas instead of a real band in their brief appearance.


The most disappointing aspect of the film is that it was written and directed by Paul Schrader, a man who, until now, has made nothing but brilliant films. Schrader, who showed that he had a feeling for capturing the feel of life on the streets in his screenplays for Martin Scorsese's films "Taxi

Driver" and "Raging Bull," has written a script riddled with cliches and stereotypes.

If you have ever played in a band, been to a concert or even bought a

record, you will know the problem that plagues "Light of Day." It just ain't rock 'n' roll.

—Review by Karl Pallmeyer

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