



Possessed

Welcome to the church of Daniel Johnston.

THE DEVIL AND DANIEL JOHNSTON: Written and directed by Jeff Feuerzeig. Cinematography by Fortunato Procopio. Music by Daniel Johnston. Starring Daniel Johnston, Mabel Johnston, Bill Johnston, Lewis Black and Jeff Tarkov. Sony Pictures Classics, 2006. PG-13. 110 minutes.

Once tape-recorded my mother scolding me. It was like recording the voice of God: Trembling, I secretly pressed play on my recorder, terrified that in her infinite wisdom she would discover my small betrayal. The idea was that, when I played it back to hear, she would take such pity on my wounded soul that I'd be showered with candy and gifts for a week. As it turns out, I never got the chance. The tape ended up a 1980s dance mix.

Daniel Johnston had no such trouble. What quickly emerges from the uneven but compelling documentary *The Devil and Daniel Johnston* is that Johnston preserved his own life obsessively, on both audiotape and Super 8 video. It raises some questions about Johnston's state of mind, which just so happens to be the subject of this film.

Unless you play guitar or subscribe to music magazines, you probably haven't heard of Daniel Johnston. The filmmakers know that, and they chart their course accordingly. A songwriter in the stream-of-consciousness vein of Bob Dylan, Johnston became semi-famous during the 1990s for the intelligence and vulnerability of his music, which he recorded at home on cassette tape. The movie is unabashedly worshipful: Even his former bedrooms are recreated in states of disarray, as if he'd slept there only the night before.

Initially, the film tries to locate Johnston's genius in some playful but occasionally intense home movies made by Johnston as a teenager. In one video, Johnston plays himself as a boy at the mercy of abusive parents. (To Johnston, abuse is being made to get out of bed.) Whether Johnston is a musical genius is

debatable. Whether he's a genius at self-promotion is not. This film works best when it reveals Johnston not as a tortured artist but as a lost son, absent friend and mercurial colleague to those who knew him. This is a person who wanted to be famous no matter what.

The movie doesn't help itself by examining Johnston's life chronologically. In the early scenes of Johnston as a boy, there's no context in which to appreciate his later achievements. I found myself wondering, why should we care? Don't wait to tell me he eventually makes a masterpiece. Whet my appetite with wine, then give me the salad days.

Having said that, the movie has many absorbing moments. (Hint: there's a plane crash that could have been avoided.) Johnston's appeal is undeniable. He can't sing or play guitar, yet many of his raw, unflinching songs have both immediate and lasting power. (That explains why Kurt Cobain regularly wore a Daniel Johnston T-shirt.) Johnston's descent into mental illness, apparently triggered by LSD, is a complex and disturbing process, resulting in an obsession with the devil that terrified his loved ones. Among his many admirers, none is more devoted or mistreated than his manager, who devotes his professional life to Johnston, with very little to show for it.

Ultimately, the movie is a provocative look at an unusual artist who continues to struggle with his demons. Is Johnston a genius or a product of our need for artistic fringe dwellers? What if his recovery takes away his talent? Why does his following continue to grow even though Johnston the artist has clearly diminished? A deeper examination of what motivates his supporters would have made this film even more satisfying than it is. It's possible we need Daniel Johnston even more than he needs us. **EW**

The Devil and Daniel Johnston opens Friday, June 2 at the Bijou.

CINEMARK
The Best Seat in Town
CINEMARK - SPRINGFIELD
Gateway Mall - Bellline @ Gateway 746-5202 - 6/2-6/5
Digital Sound in ALL Auditoriums

BREAK-UP PG13 10:05, 11:05, 1:10, 1:55, 3:55, 5:00, 7:15, 7:55, 10:00, 10:40	JUST MY LUCK PG13 1:20, 7:25
X-MEN 3: THE LAST STAND PG13 10:15, 11:30, 12:05, 12:35, 12:55, 2:15, 2:45, 3:15, 3:40, 4:55, 5:25, 6:30, 7:05, 7:35, 8:05, 9:10, 9:45, 10:15, 10:45	RV PG 10:50, 1:45, 4:20, 6:55, 9:30
OVER THE HEDGE PG 10:20, 11:15, 11:50, 1:40, 2:10, 2:45, 3:05, 4:05, 4:35, 5:30, 7:10, 7:50, 9:35, 10:10	
DA VINCI CODE PG13 10:25, 11:00, 11:45, 12:50, 2:05, 2:35, 3:10, 4:25, 5:35, 6:35, 7:05, 8:00, 9:00, 10:00, 10:35	
MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3 PG13 10:10, 10:30, 1:30, 4:10, 7:30, 10:05, 10:30	
SEE NO EVIL R 8:05, 10:25	
POSEIDON PG13 10:40, 1:25, 4:15, 7:00, 9:45	

*NO PASSES/NO SUPERSAVERS

MOVIES 12 - SPRINGFIELD
Gateway Mall - Bellline @ Gateway 741-1231

SHOWTIMES FOR 6/2-6/8
No children under age 6 will be admitted to any R-rated feature after 6:00 PM

SILENT HILL R [11:45] 2:50, 7:25, 10:15	THE SHAGGY DOG PG13 [11:20, 12:05] 1:55, 2:30, 4:20, 4:50, 6:40, 7:20, 9:15, 9:50
STAY ALIVE PG13 [11:35] 5:10, 10:20	SHE'S THE MAN PG13 [11:50] 2:15, 5:05, 7:45, 10:10
FAILURE TO LAUNCH PG13 [11:30] 2:20, 4:45, 7:15, 9:35	TAKE THE LEAD PG13 [12:10] 3:00, 7:05, 9:45
ICE AGE: THE MELT-DOWN PG [11:15, 12:00] 2:00, 3:05, 4:15, 5:20, 6:45, 7:40, 9:20, 9:55	[] FRI THRU SUN ONLY
THE BENCHMARKERS PG13 [11:25] 2:05, 4:30, 7:00, 9:25	
V FOR VENDETTA R [11:55] 2:55, 7:10, 10:05	
THE SENTINEL PG13 2:25, 7:35	
LUCKY NUMBER SLEVIN R [11:40] 2:10, 5:00, 7:30, 10:00	

STEREO SURROUND SOUND IN ALL AUDITORIUMS
4-DAY ADVANCE TICKET SALES - NO PASSES - NO SUPERSAVERS
SHOWTIMES AVAILABLE AT **CINEMARK.COM**

BIJOU ART CINEMAS
492 East 13th 686-2458
http://bijou-cinemas.com/
Advertise on our BIG SCREEN! It's fun and effective!
For the week starting Friday, June 2nd!

Academy Award Winner:
Best Foreign Language Film 2005 **Tsotsi**
5:05 & 7:05 Nightly Sun Mat 3:00 [R]

by the director of "I Shot Andy Warhol" & "American Psycho"
Gretchen Mol is **BETTIE PAGE**
5:15, 7:15 & 9:15 Nightly Sun Mat 3:15

Director Jeff Feuerzeig, 2005 Sundance Film Festival Winner — Best Director
"It's the way Feuerzeig walks with him on the line between creativity and madness that digs this haunting and hypnotic film into your memory."
— Peter Travers, ROLLING STONE
9:05 Nightly Sat Mat 2:45 [PG-13]

BIJOU LATENITE only \$4 all week!
includes FREE popcorn or soda!!
THANK YOU FOR SMOKING 11:15 pm all week! Sat Mat 3:15
The devil w/ DANIEL JOHNSTON 11:20 pm all week!

Eugene Weekly's guide to the
OREGON BACH FESTIVAL
JUNE 22, 2006

DEADLINE FOR SPACE RESERVATION: JUNE 16, 5PM.
CALL 541.484.0519 FOR DETAILS.

GREATER GOODS
515 HIGH EUGENE 485-4224 DAILY

www.GREATERGOODSONLINE.COM