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## GO ARTS

Thursday, October 11, 2012 - Tacoma, WA

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### GO Arts

Everything new on the walls, stage, screen and streets of Tacoma and South Puget Sound.

[Grit City Flicks bring T-town humor, rock and drama to the Tacoma Film Fest](#)

Post by [Rosemary Ponnekanti](#) / The News Tribune on Oct. 8, 2012 at 10:13 pm | [View 1 comment](#)



Scene from "Tacoma's Rock-n-Roll Legends" at the Tacoma Film

Fest. Courtesy image.

It's Day Five of the 2012 [Tacoma Film Fest](#), and finally I've hit a full house. The Grit City Flicks screened this afternoon at The Grand Cinema, and obviously what Tacomans love to see is films by Tacomans. But as usual the quality of the seven shorts – which screen again 6:30 p.m. Tuesday – varied wildly from must-sees to wish-you-hadn'ts.

Among the best was "Esrever," a five-minute comedy by Bryan Johnson that's just as good the second time as it was when it won the Audience Choice Award at the Grand's 72 Hour Film Competition earlier this year. The concept – a self-infatuated film director who invents a new technique of filming movies backwards in order to play them in reverse – is made funnier by local actors, silly stunt scenes and the like.

Also well-made, "The One" (Jason Daniel) offers a behind-the-scenes version of video game avatars, with funny commentary and a big kick at the end.

“Tacoma’s Rock-n-Roll Legends,” meanwhile, is a 25-minute documentary by Randy Sparks that gives a primer on how the 1950s and ‘60s Tacoma garage rock scene bust out a national music identity and paved the way for 1990s grunge. With an endearingly low-tech combination of historic photos and clips interspersed with interviews with old-time rock heroes in unlikely venues (a parked car?), Sparks creates a rockumentary that’s both inspiring and even funnier than “Spinal Tap” – because it’s real. From rock legends out of bands like The Wailers and The Ventures he gets hysterically deadpan quotes that sum up the don’t-care attitude that these guys brought to their music. Some examples:

Buck Ormsby (The Wailers, on lead singer “Rockin’ Robin” Roberts): He looked like Buddy Holly... but geeky.

The late Kent Morrill (The Wailers): While we were on tour with Dick Clark, GAC – that was the biggest record company then – wanted us to sign up. We said no, we wanted to go home, we missed our girlfriends. That was probably not a good move.

Don Wilson (The Ventures, who are still touring after 50 years): People are still discovering us. You stick around for 50 years, you’re gonna hit a lot of different age brackets.

As a film, it’s a very funny watch. As a tribute to Tacoma rock, and especially Morrill, who helped with production before his death last year, it’s outstanding.

After that, though, the Grit City Flicks start flickering. “Listen” has a weak script and not enough plot development, but actor/director Tonya Yorke tells a compelling (and true) story. “Tapat Sa Pangako” uses the silent genre and eerie score to give drama to a chilling story about domestic violence, but goes a little over-the-top visually. “Merrily, Merrily” goes even further down that track, which is a pity as the lesbian relationship could have given the idea more complexity. “Dessert and Suicide” lightens up blind dates and rejection with a cute ending but too much awkward acting and script.

Grit City Flicks screen again 6:30 p.m. Tuesday Oct. 9 at The Grand Cinema. 606 S. Fawcett Ave., Tacoma. All filmmakers (or actors) are in attendance for a Q-&-A afterwards. The Tacoma Film Festival continues through Thursday. 253-593-4474, [tacomafilmfestival.com](http://tacomafilmfestival.com)

CATEGORIES:

[Cinema, film](#)

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[Grit City Flicks, Tacoma Film Festival](#)

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