
At the Movies - 'Sound of Metal'

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- P** Patrick Foster 00:00
Today on Rockin' the Suburbs.
- J** Jim Lenahan 00:02
So Patrick, are you ready to talk about the new movie? Sound of metal on today's show?
- J** Jim Lenahan 00:07
Yep, I sure am.
- J** Jim Lenahan 00:09
Me too. The Los Angeles Times called it a bruising, deeply moving drama. And the New York Times said it builds a singular tension between silence and noise.
- P** Patrick Foster 00:19
Oh, well, that's cool. But I'm just watching it for the air stream.

 00:23

[music intro]

 Jim Lenahan 00:37

Patrick, it's been a long week, but we're at the end of the week. And yeah, this might be a good time to talk about a movie that we just watched. Right? So from time to time, we'd like to talk about music related movies here on Rockin' the Suburbs. I'm Jim Lenahan.

 Patrick Foster 00:52

And I am Patrick Foster.

 Jim Lenahan 00:53

And we have a long time listener, great friend of the show, who suggested a movie for us to watch. And we both just did that. And so we thought we'd have him on as well to talk about it and, and maybe some other things related to this movie. So with us today is Adam Coop.

 Adam Coop 01:13

Hey, Jim and Patrick. Thanks for having me.

 Patrick Foster 01:15

Ah, Coop!

 Patrick Foster 01:17

How're you doin' man?!

 Adam Coop 01:18

Doing great.

 Jim Lenahan 01:19

We always love having you on the show.

- P** Patrick Foster 01:20
I know it's been too long, right Jim? Coop is a fixture of many of our episodes, including, you know, the, one of the funnest weeks I ever had on Suburbs Pod; driving out to Bourbon and Beyond in Louisville, which I mention with tears in my eyes every week on the show, because we can't go to shows anymore. But one of the funnest trips I've had and Coop how have you guys been doing? And you know, how has Louisville been during this tough time?
- A** Adam Coop 01:53
It's on again off again. You know, right now I think restrictions just lifted. But yeah, we're we're doing okay here only going out if we have to go to the grocery or buy the occasional record... have to go buy the occasional record.
- P** Patrick Foster 02:06
Yeah, that's right. Yeah. Gotta get a Guest Room Records out there in Louisville. Yeah.
- J** Jim Lenahan 02:13
We're gonna we're gonna talk about a movie it... we do this from time to time talking about movies, and I don't think we yet have music for this. Do we? I don't think we do. Right, Patrick?
- P** Patrick Foster 02:22
No, no, but we need it. Yeah.
- J** Jim Lenahan 02:24
I think somebody might be working on it. But if anybody wants to do theme music for At the Movies, bring that on okay.
- P** Patrick Foster 02:29
Feel like, you know, Moris-soney or Morricone.
- J** Jim Lenahan 02:33

Yes. Right.

P Patrick Foster 02:34
That'd be great. Yeah, like Western type would be excellent.

J Jim Lenahan 02:38
Yep. So Adam, what is the movie you thought we should watch?

A Adam Coop 02:42
So it's called Sound of Metal. It was a movie that I saw a preview for earlier in the year and, and things got pushed around, but it finally released on Amazon. Amazon Prime.

J Jim Lenahan 02:56
Yeah, I and I, I just watched it last night. And, you know, I got a I got some stuff to say here. Patrick, you just watched it like today, right?

P Patrick Foster 03:05
I did, Jim and I watched it one and a half times. And I thought it was very, very good. So yeah, I'm ready to talk about this.

J Jim Lenahan 03:15
So let me just set this up real quick for people who aren't familiar with the movie and you can, as Adam mentioned you can watch it on Amazon Prime. First of all, it's directed, first time Director Darius Marder.

P Patrick Foster 03:29
Right.

J Jim Lenahan 03:29
And it's basically the story of this guy named Rubin who was a, you know, it's fictional story but he's a drummer in a, I guess from the title of the movie was, you would say would

be a metal band, although it didn't really seem like it exactly to me, but it's some kind of, you know, crazy hard rock, punk, metal thrash, experimental some kind of band like that, but definitely, you know, super, super hard and crazy right?



03:57

[music clip from the film. Loud heavy metal guitar reverb. Audience cheering in distance.]



Jim Lenahan 05:24

All of a sudden, he just starts developing hearing problems and, and loses you know, like, 80% of his hearing or something like that. And goes to seek treatment in various different ways. And it sort of goes off and tells the story of a person dealing with with sort of sudden deafness and really gets into sort of the cult-, the Deaf culture, and sort of what does that mean? And how does that, how does it feel to exist within that or to be part of a different part of society, right? Or deal with sort of that, that coping, right? That you have to go through.



Patrick Foster 06:07

Totally, totally, Jim. Yeah. And I'll also add that it's a love story, too. There's a there's a pretty compelling love story there.



Jim Lenahan 06:16

Right.



Jim Lenahan 06:16

And one more thing I want to say about this, just I read today, an interview with the director, who's, you know, he obviously wasn't making this with the pandemic in mind. But he did say there's some parallels here, since we were talking about that. He said, in this sense of like, what is normal. And so that idea of that. So think about this, it's really actually worked out as a great metaphor, this idea that, like, you have sort of normal existence, then something suddenly happens, that changes it. It becomes sort of a crisis. And then you sort of find your way out of that, but you don't really return to the way things were before. And it creates a new normal, right? That just somehow different, right? So I thought that was a really fascinating thing for our times right now to watch it with that. Okay, I let you guys talk. But all I want to say is this. I found this to be a pretty

fascinating movie. And what's interesting, I think, for our listeners, is that although it's it's a movie that has music at its core, it's not really that much music in this movie. It's a very quiet movie. I mean, I guess you would, you would maybe come to realize that based on the topic, but music plays this really kind of like understated role, I think, throughout in really interesting ways that I thought was really compelling. And so okay, and I'll open it up to you guys. Tell me what you thought movie.

P Patrick Foster 07:37

Yeah, completely. Well said Jim and fascinating film. Coop, what was it about this movie that just, you know, interested you so much?

A Adam Coop 07:50

So So two things. First of all, I love the movie. And Jim, to kind of touch on what you were talking about, if there's one con for this movie, it's that I wish there was more music in it. But I love the movie for two reasons.

A Adam Coop 08:09

One, if you're on Facebook, you might have saw my post, that as someone who played in bands, back in my teenage years and early 20s, and stupidly did not wear hearing protection; I've.... I'm not deaf by any means. But I do have a permanent ringing in both ears.

J Jim Lenahan 08:26

Oh, wow.

A Adam Coop 08:27

And I tell you what, once this pandemic kit, I didn't realize how much I actually read lips. It's sometimes very difficult to understand someone talking to me with their mask on. So...

J Jim Lenahan 08:40

Interesting.

- A** Adam Coop 08:41
Yeah. Like I said, I'm not, not deaf by any means. But when it comes to hearing, that when I when I heard about this guy playing in a band who's starting to lose his hearing, I just I had to see this movie. And then also the secondary reason. At the University of Louisville, I was required to take four semesters of a language and sign language counted for that. So I took four semesters of sign language at U of L. And and what I loved about the movie is they were, they were actually signing! That was actual sign language that wasn't just made up.
- A** Adam Coop 09:18
That's so frustrating when I see a movie and someone signing and it's, it's not it's not sign language. But but but it you know, one of the one of the things that I connected with, I don't know if you remember the teacher at the deaf school?
- P** Patrick Foster 09:33
Yeah, that was a cool part. Yeah.
- A** Adam Coop 09:35
She's a she's a deaf actress. I don't know. If you'd watch the Walking Dead. She's on the Walking Dead as well.
- P** Patrick Foster 09:41
Wow, that's amazing.
- A** Adam Coop 09:43
And then kind of like the Riz Ahmed's mentor, Joe.
- P** Patrick Foster 09:49
Yeah.
- A** Adam Coop 09:50
Joe was, whatever. I'm not sure what his name is, but he was raised by Deaf parents. So

he... all that signing, he actually is hearing. But But yeah, all the all the signing was just it was great. I really loved that they nailed that aspect of it for me. But yeah, we grew up we grew up with, with friends in the deaf community. Went to church with them. My dad signs extremely well. I haven't used it much over the years. So I've forgotten more than I remember but, uh. There is a there is a one guy at work who's deaf, and I do sign with him every day. But it's more of like a, "How are you doing? How was your weekend?" type of thing. So, but yeah, I thought it was, I thought it was great the portrayal of the deaf community.

J

Jim Lenahan 10:40

And that's what I really like about it, too. I like any movie that sort of takes me to a world in which I have very little reference, right? Very little frame of reference. And so I thought that was really, that was very compelling. You mentioned the American Sign Language. So I just read today that, so the lead actor is Riz Ahmed, and he spent six months learning American Sign Language and also learning how to play the drums, so.

A

Adam Coop 11:07

Well, and also bulking up because he, he put on some muscle for that.

P

Patrick Foster 11:11

Oh hell yeah. Yeah, yeah. And I gotta tell you, guys, there was a part in this movie, although it was intense and, and serious, as you are talking about when I laughed really loud. And it was like, at the beginning, when he goes, like, I used to imagine Jeff Goldblum was my dad, and I'd watch him fly.

P

Patrick Foster 11:36

That's my dad! And I was like, that's so weird that it's got to be real, you know? Like, that's really funny.

P

Patrick Foster 11:45

And also, I, you know, that was a badass Airstream trailer. They had had like, a recording studio in it.

 Jim Lenahan 11:55
Yeah.

 Patrick Foster 11:55
And also, you know, an amazing life partner. And that whole relationship between those two is amazing. And there's a very moving scene, folks, at the end, and you got to watch the movie, you know, definitely recommending it...

 Jim Lenahan 12:10
Yeah.

 Patrick Foster 12:12
...where, you know, the main character, the drummer that we've been talking about goes through an intense transformation. And then witnesses his, you know, love of his life singing with their father, leg movie, in French and it's it's quite a moving scene. It really is. And you know, what I love Coop too, was the way they use the audio on the film, like sometimes...

 Adam Coop 12:39
Oh absolutely.

 Patrick Foster 12:40
...crackle, you know, was so fascinating. What did you think about that? I thought it was

 Adam Coop 12:44
Oh, yeah. I think they did an excellent job of that, like that low hum that you might, you know, that you were were that that you can hear that noise in the background?

 12:56
[plays scene from movie where Riz Ahemd's character begins to experience the first signs of hearing loss. He's preparing for rehearsals and starts to experience a sudden sensation of white noise, and feeling like he's underwater. And then the audio completely cuts out.]

A Adam Coop 13:31
And then also in scenes where there's just no audio whatsoever, right? I mean, it just the audio completely drops out. And it's just all visual. You know, it that, that's one of the things that the sound direction for sure in this film helps tell the story.

P Patrick Foster 13:51
Yeah, it was fantastic.

A Adam Coop 13:53
Yeah.

J Jim Lenahan 13:53
So

A Adam Coop 13:54
Yep.

J Jim Lenahan 13:54
Yes. And I also read about that, too. And they spent apparently, some insane amount of time trying to really figure out the way to replicate audio in a real way that a person with, you know, that a deaf person would hear, right? Because...

P Patrick Foster 14:10
Yeah.

J Jim Lenahan 14:11
I don't think I don't correct me if I'm wrong here, Adam, I don't think most people who are deaf are completely deaf. Right? They hear they hear something. Right? And so that's what they were trying to sort of replicate. But think how difficult that would be because for a hearing person, how do you do, how do you replicate it in a way... that would be accurate because because I'm not sure that the deaf person would be able to really fully explain how it would sound and wouldn't necessarily be able to hear what you have

created? So, I don't know. Like that's the right really compelling thing to think of. They've apparently spent a ton of research to like figure out how to, how to do that sound engineering, right?

A

Adam Coop 14:53

Well, what and another thing out there's when he's in the deaf community, and they're sitting around the dinner table.

P

Patrick Foster 15:01

Yeah?

A

Adam Coop 15:02

You got to think if they if you can't hear how do you get someone's attention? You smack on the table, right? The vibrations and that right there is just I've seen that in action in real life. So, my, my professor at U of L, at the University of Louisville, he was deaf. So if we wanted to communicate with him, we had to sign. So and that was one way that he would he get your attention to smack that table, you know, smack the table or smack your desk and

P

Patrick Foster 15:34

Wow.

A

Adam Coop 15:35

So that that was a great like slice of life moment to show. Everybody signing at the table, there's what eight or 10 people around the table? And everybody's eating, and everybody has everybody signin'. And you know, it looks very chaotic. But that's that's how they that's how they communicate. I mean, think about if you were at a party, right? You'd be yellin', you'd be yelling over somebody else. They just happen to be signing over somebody else.

P

Patrick Foster 16:02

Well, I gotta say, Coop to that scene, I don't want to give the whole movie away, folks go watch it. But there's a scene late in the movie where he is at a party and the way they do that.

J Jim Lenahan 16:14
Yes, that was really great.

o 16:16
[scene from film is played where there's an exchange of sign language at a busy party. The film portrays through an audio experience what Riz Ahmed's character is experiencing as he's at the party. Voices are muffled and robotic.]

P Patrick Foster 17:15
I just want to say one more thing to. The kind of music The band played, made me want to like buy their album, but also the T shirts that he was wearing, like, we're so onpoint. Like, I just said new Bowden which we've talked about on our podcast, and like, rudimentary pen I and all these like super intense crazy noise bands. Man, they really really did the research. I mean, it was so great. Yeah.

A Adam Coop 17:46
So the the name of the band is Blackgammon, and you better believe I immediately went online to try to find a shirt.

P Patrick Foster 17:53
I mean, the stuff they were doing was like, amazing. Where did that come from, you know, with with just a drum and a guitar and like a you know, and and there's a very heartbreaking scene too. I'll tell you really quick when, yeah, he's watching his, you know, her perform on video. Yeah, it's kind of amazing.

J Jim Lenahan 18:16
I want to build on something Adam said about the vibrations, because I think it's, I think this is important why they made this character a drummer and not, say, a guitarist.

P Patrick Foster 18:26
Yeah.

J Jim Lenahan 18:27
Or, you know, what have you. Because I think in some way, even though it takes a long time to get there, he could relate to the idea of vibrations as some form of communication. Right?

P Patrick Foster 18:37
Yeah.

J Jim Lenahan 18:37
And so that's what he was, you know, you know, that that's what his music would be. Right? It's, it's, it's, it's a form of communication in itself. And so when you sort of, like, get to that level of acceptance, and I think the key was that, I won't say too much here, but that I thought was a really touching scene with this playground slide.

P Patrick Foster 18:55
Oh, yeah. Yeah, that was my favorite scene Jim.

A Adam Coop 18:57
By far my favorite, yeah.

J Jim Lenahan 19:01
That was it man.

J Jim Lenahan 19:02
It made him realize, like,

P Patrick Foster 19:04
Oh, that was great.

J Jim Lenahan 19:05
Um, things may have changed, but he has lost everything? Right? Right? And so, and then

there's another scene later, which I thought was really important to me, because you know, I think everybody has these kinds of thoughts. Like what would happen if you lost one of your senses, right? What would life be like

P Patrick Foster 19:22
And that's what I'm saying.

J Jim Lenahan 19:22
I always think like, God, you know, if I couldn't hear then I couldn't appreciate all these records I have right? And I couldn't do all that, but there was a scene where, he where somebody playing the piano and all and all the students and he's one of them was with these group of students were like putting their hands and forearms like, on the piano itself, to feel the music, and I thought

P Patrick Foster 19:43
Yep.

J Jim Lenahan 19:44
So that was really telling to me because it was this notion of like, you can still experience music, it's just in a different way, right? And it's always...

P Patrick Foster 19:51
Never gonna leave you, yeah.

J Jim Lenahan 19:52
Maybe it's even a more intimate way. Right? Feeling it into your body as opposed to...

P Patrick Foster 19:58
Right.

J Jim Lenahan 19:58

...listening to it coming through a radio speaker right?

- P** Patrick Foster 20:01
Well, it's an amazing point Jim. And I think we've kind of proven our point that you need to go watch this movie.
- J** Jim Lenahan 20:08
Okay. All right.
- P** Patrick Foster 20:10
But also, let me say this, I think one of the most fascinating things about this film and and Coop, thank you so much for, for bringing this to our attention. And the attention of our community, is that, you know, when you get down to it, right, it's about belief. And that's one of the most amazing things I think about this film, especially, you know, as you mentioned, the deaf community, belief and, and belief in, you know, why we're here and all that. So having said that, I just think it's a great watch.
- J** Jim Lenahan 20:47
Now, Adam had an idea for another question he wanted to throw out related to this. So what was that question?
- A** Adam Coop 20:55
I don't I don't know about you all, but I'm at age now, especially with the the hearing damage that I have is that I have to take earplugs to concerts. So what are what's the loudest concert or the some of the loudest concerts you've ever been either a part of whether in the audience or on stage?
- P** Patrick Foster 21:16
Well, I can tell you right off, and I may have said this at one time on our podcast, that I once went to a Big Black concert. And the opening act was Pussy Galore featuring John Spencer, and I never heard anything so physically abusive in my entire life. And, and Steve Albini just seemed to be enjoying how, you know, ridiculously painful...

J Jim Lenahan 21:39
Right.

P Patrick Foster 21:40
...it was. So that's it. Never been at anything louder. And you know, and all those years, you know, whenever I've said this before, and Jim and I have talked about this, when when Jim or I come home from the show, and our ears are ringing. Wow, it was pretty loud.

J Jim Lenahan 21:58
Yeah. For me, it's probably Bob Mould. I think probably the Bob Mould shows I've been to have been the loudest. And you know, he prides himself on that I think in some way. This is probably a bad thing to admit, but I don't wear earplugs or protection or anything like that. And I know that I probably should. But I think I've said this before, too. And again, don't do this kids. This is not what I would recommend to do. But I always kind of, to me, it was always sort of like a feeling of accomplishment in some way if my ears were ringing the day after show. You know what I'm saying, like I went out and did something!

J Jim Lenahan 22:30
I went to a loud rock 'n' roll show! Right. Right. Exactly. Yeah.

J Jim Lenahan 22:35
The thing with Bob Mould is my ears would still be ringing like two days later. And that's when you think that's when you realize there may be a problem.

P Patrick Foster 22:43
Yeah, yeah, that's when you get really scared is like, wait!

J Jim Lenahan 22:46
What's your loudest show then?

A Adam Coop 22:50
So I have two, they're on opposite ends of the spectrum. About three or four years ago. U2

played at Papa John's Cardinal Stadium.

P Patrick Foster 23:00
Hmm.

A Adam Coop 23:01
And so it's a football stadium. And we were standing basically against the rail that's next to the stage and right in front of some speakers. Huge subs. So for several days afterwards, you just had this low hum from those subs. And then the on the opposite end, year and a half ago, got to see the Raconteurs at the Blue Room in Nashville. And standing about, 10 feet from Jack White's amplifier. He had like a, you know, Fender, jazzmaster, whatever on the stage. But it was due to the height of the stage. I was basically staring at his amplifier. And it was probably a...

P Patrick Foster 23:51
No! Yeah.

A Adam Coop 23:52
...probably a solid week I had cotton in my ear and actually traveling home that night from Nashville I was trying to listen, I had to I had to turn music off because literally, I couldn't understand it. It was my ears were ringing and distorted. So yeah, I take I take earplugs with me now.

J Jim Lenahan 24:13
Good.

A Adam Coop 24:14
Make sure stand back away from the speakers. I've done enough damage. I want to want to be able to hang on to my hearing as much as as long as I can.

J Jim Lenahan 24:22
No, that's a good thing. That's what you should do so.

- P** Patrick Foster 24:24
Well, I you know, and and man Coop. I totally know what you're talking about. Like if you were in that one, you know, firing line of an amplifier like in the middle range. It's so painful. I've done it to myself.
- J** Jim Lenahan 24:40
Thanks, Adam Coop for joining us today.
- A** Adam Coop 24:43
Thanks for having me.
- J** Jim Lenahan 24:44
And if anyone out there wants to comment at all on Sound of Metal. We would love to hear what your thoughts are. You can call you can leave a message and we'll put your voice on an upcoming show. The number is 612-440-1984
- J** Jim Lenahan 24:58
There you go. Or you can email rock@suburbspod.com or find us on Facebook, or Twitter or Instagram at suburbspod. Alright. Alright, let's get out of here, guys. It's Rockin' the Suburbs. I'm Jim Lenahan.
- P** Patrick Foster 25:12
I'm Patrick Foster.
- J** Jim Lenahan 25:13
And with us has been...
- A** Adam Coop 25:15
Adam Coop!
- J** Jim Lenahan 25:15

All right, thanks. We'll talk to you later.



Jim Lenahan 25:31

[music outro. Heavy fast drums and guitars playing. Lots of metal screaming.]



Patrick Foster 26:40

And, you know, just want to, you know, encourage people to just go see it and not necessarily listen to what we just said. So, erase this podcast, go watch a movie, come back and let's do it.