

Program note for **Pinewood Dialogue with Jim Jarmusch** and screening of *Year of the Horse*

October 5, 1997

Series: *Jim Jarmusch: A Sad and Beautiful World*

**YEAR OF THE HORSE**

*October Films, 1997, 107 mins. 35mm Dolby SR print courtesy of October Films.*

*Directed by Jim Jarmusch. Produced by L.A. Johnson. Photographed by Jim Jarmusch, L.A. Johnson, Steve Onuska, and Arthur Rosato. Edited by Jay Rabinowitz, Michael Alan Dennis, and Joel Heller. Sound by John Hausmann.*

*With Neil Young and Crazy Horse (Billy Talbot, Ralph Molina, and Frank "Pancho" Sempedro).*

**Statement by Jim Jarmusch, from press kit for Year of the Horse:**

*Year of the Horse* is a rock'n'roll movie about the band Neil Young and Crazy Horse and the music that they make together. The live performances were filmed in Europe and the U.S. during their 1996 tour. The interviews and behind-the-scenes footages is also largely from Bernard Shakey's film *Muddy Track*. A lot of the performance footage was filmed in 16mm, but a large percentage was photographed on-stage on Super-8 film by L.A. Johnson and myself. We used Super-8 partly because of the small cameras, which allowed us to easily shoot by ourselves, without a crew, but mostly because we love the way it looks-and because the raw beauty of the material somehow corresponds to the particular quality of the Horse's music.

Neil Young and Crazy Horse has always been one of my favorite bands and, as Scott Young (Neil's Dad) says in *Year of the Horse*: "Their music just seems to get better and better." These guys aren't interested in rock'n'roll poseurism, or second-guessing the trends of youth culture. They just want to make music together, and *Year of the Horse* makes it clear that their music comes from the whole band. Neil Young is certainly somehow like their navigator, leading them into the soaring territory of their songs, but Ralph, Poncho, and Billy are anything but "sidemen." Together they create a singular sound that, in the same way John Coltrane kept Jazz alive and evolving with his group's "sheets of sound," keeps rock'n'roll alive through its emotional connection to these musicians while they're playing it. Poncho

Sampedro says it best in *Year of the Horse*: "If I stop and think about what I'm playing, I get completely lost, but if I turn off my mind and just follow the music-away we go!"

Concerning the film itself, I have to add that it would not exist without the amazing collaboration of L.A. Johnson (producer and fellow Super-8 cameraman), and our brilliant editor, Jay Rabinowitz. All three of us are long-time fans of the Horse. We like the movie we made 'cause, if nothing else, you get to see and hear Crazy Horse playing their own transcendent brand of rock 'n' roll.

*The Pinewood Dialogues, an ongoing series of screenings and discussions with significant creative figures in film, television, and digital media, as supported with a generous grant from The Pinewood Foundation.*

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