

# The Runaways (2010)

Rated R. Running time: 1 hour, 49 min. Reviewed by Don Smith

First a caveat—this is a movie. The Runaways were that rarity about the life and death of an in the 1970s, an all girl all girl rock 'n' roll band.

That means heavy doses of drugs, sex, and oh yeah, rock 'n' roll. 2010 Appirition Films

Much of the time the language is beyond profane and beyond vulgar. If you have ears and standards sensitive to that sort of thing: Don't Go!

The Runaways, directed by Floria Sigismondi, is a movie based on the autobiography Neon Angel by Cherie Currie. If you don't recognize Cherie's name, perhaps you will have better luck with Joan Jett—or maybe not. During the early seventies, Joan (Kristen Stewart) and a promoter/producer Kim Fowley (Michael Shannon) decided to organize an all-girl band. When Joan's guitar teacher pointed out that, "girls don't play electric guitars;" it was all of the impetus Jett needed. With Fowley's support, they recruited the rest of the band including Currie (Dakota Fanning) who became lead singer. In 1975 the band was dubbed The Runaways.

Time for another caveat—If you decide to see this movie in order to see Fanning do one of her precocious children roles: Don't Go!

Recognizing the difficulties that a band like the Runaways might have, Fowley put them through a concert boot camp which included fending off all sorts of objects that might be thrown at them by the audience literally without missing a beat. Because the band achieved a significant following during its brief existence, it is no secret what happened to them.

Still the reality of life on the road for a group of teen aged girls was glaring and merciless. Cherie was 15 when she signed a contract with the band. The chaperones were a few "roadies" who were not much older than they were. It is ironic to see a group of rock stars at their peak who are so thoroughly victimized by the men assigned to protect them and by Fowley who never seemed to be able to account for all the money they were making. Finally the combination of jealousy, fatigue, and the exploitation proved to be too much. But despite its rawness and raunch, I found it to be an energetic and well made movie. The photography was as "in your face" as was the music of The Runaways.