

Arts & Entertainment

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JARED LETO

Role of a lifetime

After nearly six years away from acting, Jared Leto steps back into the spotlight in "Dallas Buyers Club"



Jared Leto as Rayon in Jean-Marc Vallée's fact-based drama, DALLAS BUYERS CLUB, a Focus Features release. Photo Credit: Anne Marie Fox / Focus Features.

By Kirsten Coachman

Matthew McConaughey, Jared Leto and Jennifer Garner join forces on the silver screen in "Dallas Buyers Club," opening Friday, Nov. 8 in San Francisco. Directed by Jean-Marc Vallée, the film was inspired by true events of Texas native Ron Woodruff and his determination to survive.

In 1985, Woodruff (McConaughey), an electrician and rodeo cowboy that lives a carefree "sex, drugs and rock-n-roll" kind of lifestyle, is diagnosed with HIV and is told that he has 30 days left to live. He informs his doctors (Denis O'Hare and Jennifer Garner), "Ain't nothing out there that can kill Ron Woodruff in 30 days," and dives into doing research, only to learn that treatment options in the U.S. are few and far between and opts to cross the border, where he finds alternative, non-FDA approved drugs that he smuggles back into the U.S.

He makes a connection within the gay community, a transgender woman named Rayon (Leto), who like Woodruff, shared a passion to live and thrive. Together, they form a buyers

club that they run out of a motel, where those who have HIV can buy memberships that grants them access to the non-approved medicines that Woodruff continues to smuggle into the U.S.

Prior to working on "Dallas Buyers Club," Leto had spent nearly six years away from acting. He filled the hiatus with recording and releasing music with his band, 30 Seconds to Mars, who have toured all over the world as well as trying his

a cliché of the drag queen dancing on the table with a boa, running out of the room with a quick one-liner. I thought there was more. I saw this as an opportunity to do more.

"I had a very specific idea about how I wanted to play this part. I didn't want to play a drag queen. I saw her as a transgendered person. Someone who really wants to live her life as a woman and that's a key distinction to make."

As part of his preparation for the role, Leto met with people in the transgender community, listening and educating himself. He said they spoke about everything, "from physicality to what it's like to tell your parents about who you really are."

From there, the next big step was the physical transformation. Leto had less than four weeks to completely immerse himself into the body of Rayon.

"It's amazing what you can do when you put your mind to it. I had a very limited amount of time, so I basically stopped eating," he said. "I lost 30-40 pounds, and I stopped counting. At a certain point, it's like, it

hand at directing. During a recent press event in San Francisco, he said that he "could have made it an even 10, no problem."

Leto, who described his character Rayon as "so kind and sweet" and "very gentle and soft," felt like he could bring truth to his onscreen performance.

"I think we've seen this part before on film," he said. "Sometimes in a fun way, but we've seen it represented as



Courtesy of Jared Leto.

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doesn't matter.

"There was the weight loss, there was the heels, the waxing – that was big one. Once you make those commitments, your eyebrows come off and you're like, 'Okay, here we are.' Armpits were the worst, though. That really left a mark."

Once he found himself in Rayon's skin, Leto stayed in character for the duration

of filming.

"[It] was just an obvious thing for me," he said. "I mean, there were so many physical attributes, so many emotional things to keep track of, I couldn't imagine letting go of all that and being like, 'Hey bro, what's going on?' 'Action!' 'Oh! Wait, let me bring all of this back.' I don't think I would have done a very good job, so stay-

ing focused was essential."

He recalled a moment during filming where he had gone to Whole Foods and three different looks he received from people, which was a moment he felt was important to experience.

"I got three looks. One of them was, 'Is that Jared? No...' The other was like, 'Who is that?' And the third was 'What is that?' You know,

with a slight, 'I don't like that.' It was important to get that," he said. "And then to imagine what that would have been like in 1985."

Even though McConaughey is experiencing what's being described as a "McConaissance" in his career, it's Leto's performance that has been creating a buzz surrounding the possibility of taking home an Oscar at next year's Academy Awards. Hearing that kind praise for his performance in "Dallas Buyers Club" makes Leto's heart skip a beat.

"It's incredible. It's a really wonderful feeling, and it's great to hear people say those things," he said. "I never imagined in a million years anyone would ever put my name and, you know, that other name in the same sentence."

Even with the high praise, Leto isn't sure what his future in acting holds, sharing that he isn't looking at any scripts, which was also the case prior to working on "Dallas Buyers Club," but he did express that he's glad that he finally took a look at the script for the film.

"Role of a lifetime. What an amazing part," he said. "Where do you go from here? Maybe I should



Jared Leto as Rayon in Jean-Marc Vallée's fact-based drama, DALLAS BUYERS CLUB, a Focus Features release. Photo Credit: Anne Marie Fox / Focus Features.



Courtesy of Focus Features.

Dallas Buyers Club

Drama. Starring Matthew McConaughey, Jared Leto and Jennifer Garner. Directed by Jean-Marc Vallée. (R. 117 minutes.)



never make another film. It'd be a good one to end on, wouldn't it? Life is short. There's a big world out there. Lots to explore."

Kirsten Coachman is the Assignment Editor of the Academy of Art University newspaper. Tweet her at @AAUPaperGirl1.

MUSIC & THE CITY

STRANGE TALK

Strange Talk in San Francisco

Australian band brings electro-pop sound to Brick & Mortar Musical Hall for a free show



Photograph by Shervin Lainez.

By Kirsten Coachman

On Tuesday, Nov. 5, electro-pop band Strange Talk will be playing a free show at the Brick & Mortar Music Hall with Battleme and Aan.

Hailing from Melbourne, Australia, the band (Stephen Docker, Gerard Sidhu, Travis Constable and Gillian Gregory) has previously played festivals, such as Parklife and Stereosonic and have opened for bands Foster The People, Marina and The Diamonds and the Rapture.

Strange Talk has been turning heads with their self-titled EP, which features their irresistible upbeat single, "Climbing Walls." The song hit #1 on Billboard's Uncharted chart.

Strange Talk's full-length U.S. debut album, "Cast Away," will be released early next year. You can download their track, "Another Day" for free, when you sign up for the mailing list at strangetalkmusic.com.

When: Tuesday, Nov. 5, Where: 1710 Mission St., Time: 8 p.m. (doors)/ 9 p.m. (show), Cost: FREE

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