

98. "Springsteen & I"

St.Kilda was pummelled again this week. There will be no watching replays and trying to make sense of yet another Saints loss. I will leave it to other Knackers. The only positive I could find was who I watched it with. It is tradition for some away games that I take food around my J and M's place, Amanda's parents. They are raising another little one of 5. We eat good takeaway and then head to the couch, catching up with each other while watching the Saints do what is apparently their best. Little Z entertains us with her eating or her playing or her jumping all over her Dad so he can never quite relax enough. We've known each other for 17 years. Amanda and Daniel went to kinder together. When I first met J at the gates of the kinder waiting for pick up, never having spoken to each other before, she told me she'd just been diagnosed with cancer and was given six months to live. A bit shocked and shocking, I was blown away by her honesty. We became mates.

My brother in law died after 6 months, J has lasted 17 years. Never cancer free for any of it. She's outlived all others who had her type of cancer. She's had all sorts of cancers. I think she survived to see Amanda grow up enough to remember her, then old enough to finish school, and now she has a new little one who she wants to get through life as well. She, J, is one of the best fighters I know. Our lives became intertwined, through our kids, batmitzvahs and barmitzvahs, 40ths, 50ths, grandchildren for Judy and we just keeping plowing on and seeing each other's families grow. We don't catch up so often, but it's a catch up when we do.

So we shared food and footy, always a good combination, and then went our separate ways again.

Today I went to see "Springsteen & I" with Deb, the person who I started my footy life with 46 years ago. We were 12 and would wear our duffle coats and scarves and take our floggers with us, line up early at Moorabbin and sit along the fence line. We'd get autographs from the likes of Ross Smith and Carl Dietrich and Bob Murray and Darryl Baldock and Cowboy Neal and keep scrap books and write stories about the Monkees. It lasted until late High School, me in Springvale, she in East Bentleigh. Football ceased to be our common activity and Deb never got back into it again. Me, it obviously lay dormant.

We shared music too, Deb leading the way. It was she who years later bought Bruce Springsteen to my attention, we'd listen to brilliant record after brilliant record. We went to a concert in the 80's, our first in Australia. Deb has gone on to seeing him in the USA several times with her god daughter Alex. She is also godmother to my eldest Rachel. So it was only fitting that earlier this year, that we went again to see Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band. She went three times. I went the once, couldn't make the second because of an ear infection. And I had thought the music affected my ears. Nevertheless, Bruce bought us together again after a time apart.

What an extraordinary and surprising film. This is a 2 hour documentary, directed by Baillie Walsh, writer, director, cinematographer and starring people like Deb. Hard core fans. The call went out via his official website for fans to send in film on their thoughts and feelings about Bruce and the impact on their lives. What resulted is a wide range of people sharing their Springsteen experiences. Anyone who has been to his concert knows of how much he puts into his amazing songs, his stage performances, his unbelievably talented band who create a wall of great music. He has been performing since the 70's, and has so many albums, anthems, and fans.

This film is a tribute to all. The people who make up the audiences. The man who's poetry and music has themed their lives. The musicians who have stayed with the "Boss" over the years and have become our family as well as his.

Throughout the film, fans tell stories, much as we Almanackers do every week. They share stories, some sad, some poignant, some very funny. All obsessed and loving every minute. What becomes clear is that there is a community Bruce Springsteen has created around the world, much as there is a community created by John Harms and Paul Daffey. The scale is slightly different, but the experience resonates. And people love to share their stories. And it takes special people to create a community where this is possible.

When I posted my story of "Lost Dog" last week, my Almanac community gathered around me and my sister sent the link out to others and to Jons family and my words were able to sooth me as well as others. It became shared and for that, and the responses, I will be forever grateful.

A week later, another group of people shared a story in a theatre full of like-minded individuals and the film charmed us and entertained us and made us laugh and cry a little. It's well worth a look.

Yvette Wroby

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