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An Incredible soundtrack that transports you across generations and classes to the sonic equivalent of a post coital hot fudge sunday. 22 MP3 Songs ELECTRONIC: Trip Hop, ROCK: Acoustic Details: 'Eat This New York': This Film Cooks By Ann Hornaday, Washington Post Staff Writer When you see "Eat This New York" -- and you really should see it -- go on a full stomach. This lively, absorbing documentary about best friends who open a tiny cafe in the heart of Brooklyn is full of such mouth-watering shots of cooking and eating that a jumbo-sized popcorn and pallid soda simply won't do. "Eat This New York" opens with some sobering statistics. There are 18,000 restaurants in New York, and 1,000 new ones open every year. Only one out of five of those will succeed. Against the backdrop of those long-shot odds, we meet John McCormick and Billy Phelps, Minneapolis transplants who have always wanted to run a cafe in the tradition of 1920s Paris, playing host to all manner of artists, musicians, poets and neighborhood wags. "Eat This New York" begins in July 2001, when McCormick finds the ideal spot, a vest-pocket corner building in Williamsburg, a polyglot Brooklyn neighborhood where young hipsters rub shoulders with Hasidic Jews and Dominican and Puerto Rican immigrants. It's the ideal demographic soup for McCormick and Phelps, and they begin gutting the minuscule space -- and entering that circle of hell known as "renovation." While the film's subjects dicker with contractors and chefs and loan officers (and while they progressively drain their respective bank accounts), directors Kate Novack and Andrew Rossi set off to interview the stars of New York's restaurant world, gleaning reminiscences and advice from such gastronomical luminaries as Drew Nieporent (Montrachet, Nobu), Daniel Boulud (Daniel, db Bistro Moderne), Rocco DiSpirito (Union Pacific), Sirio Maccioni (Le Cirque), Keith McNally (Balthazar, Pastis) and others. Although they have all been hugely successful, there's a world-weariness they share, even the ebullient Maccioni, who admits he hates his job and wakes up every day promising himself to be

good in spite of his distaste for the business. As every restaurateur knows, and as McCormick and Phelps come to learn over 14 excruciating months, that business is a heartbreaker. Between those palate-tempting sequences in Manhattan's most exclusive eateries, we follow the two Midwesterners as they confront much more than they bargained for (at one point, their relationship becomes so strained that McCormick goes into therapy; the therapist winds up being an investor). Dust, disagreements and endless delays -- while Novack and Rossi keep a running account of the schedule with a calendar at the bottom of the screen -- give the cafe project a sort of Sisyphean sense of timelessness, as if this is what these two young men were put on Earth to do: not open a restaurant, but simply work to get it open, forever. (The directors keep the proceedings from getting bogged down with sprightly editing and a lyrical score by New York musicians Steve O'Reilly and Matt Anthony.) As painful as that process gets at times, it still has its pleasures, like the impromptu Halloween party McCormick and Phelps throw while the cafe is still under construction. Juxtaposed with scenes at Daniel that could be straight out of Tom Wolfe are shots of people eating pizza and drinking beer by candlelight; it's clear which group is having more fun. Novack and Rossi do a terrific job of capturing the absurdities of the restaurant business -- at one point Phelps and McCormick are seen eradicating pigeon poop, and a little while later one of the Manhattan restaurateurs sheepishly puts lucky coins under tables at the instruction of a feng shui coach. But "Eat This New York" also conveys the nurturing, almost spiritual side of the restaurant world, which even at its most haute is still in the business of one of the human race's most sacred rituals. It wouldn't be sporting to indicate how "Eat This New York" turns out, but the ending is enormously satisfying and moving. DiSpirito has a "reality" show about a similar theme on TV, but he couldn't have anything on a couple of guys from Minnesota with a few bucks and a shared dream of creating their own movable feast.

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