

DVD★Reviews

Frank Zappa

Summer Of '82: When Zappa Came To Sicily

★★★

Wienerworld, cat no tbc(DVD)

Leave the bass player, take the cannoli

1982 may not have been the most interesting year in terms of Frank Zappa's discography, but there was never a time when he wasn't worth seeing live. This film, by Sicilian filmmaker Salvo Cuccia, tells the story of Zappa's ill-fated attempt to play the Stadio Renzo Barbera in Palermo as part of the '82 tour; and the filmmaker's ill-fated attempt to see him.

In actual fact, the documentary has many strands, all of which converge around Sicily in one form or another. Cuccia also explores FZ's long-standing friendship with Italian music magazine editor and fan Massimo Bassoli, who tricked Frank – a man who didn't like to stray far from his hotel while on tour – into seeing his father's hometown of Partinico, Sicily – a place that FZ can later be heard describing to keyboard player Tommy Mars as "5th world".

Over 30 years later, Bassoli takes Dweezil and Diva Zappa to the site of the old Zappa family home, and a key part of the film is the Zappas' attempts to put their Sicilian heritage into perspective.

The events of the '82 tour were immortalised within the artwork of *The Man From Utopia*. The Palermo show is notorious for having ended in a riot, and the kitschy material of the time makes the evening's events seem all the more surreal. Most fascinating is the inclusion of guitar tech Thomas Nordegg's footage, which also captures the backstage goings on after the band's premature exit.

Summer Of '82 has a relaxed and philosophical style, and it's a blessing that it doesn't over-dramatise, as this allows for a thoughtful film which asserts that – though "music is the best" – family is pretty important, too. Arf. *Alun Hamnett*

Lou Reed

A Night With Lou Reed

★★★★

Wienerworld WNRD 7073

Magic and loss from Lou's 1983 live peak

Many Reed followers consider the band he fronted

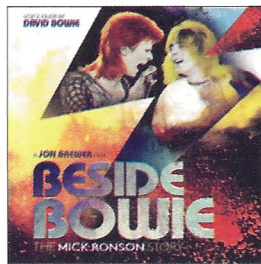
with guitarist Bob Quine as the very best of his post-Velvets outfits. The intensely dedicated Quine's metallic assaults with Richard Hell's Voidoids had long piqued Reed's interest and, when the pair clicked, the recently sober Lou discovered his most vital musical foil since John Cale.

He returned to RCA and, inspired by Quine, rediscovered guitar playing when recording 1982's career rejuvenating *The Blue Mask*. Unfortunately, this heavenly creative marriage turned sour when Reed resented the praise being heaped on Quine and buried his contributions to 1983's *Legendary Hearts* in the mix.

Quine was incensed but stuck out the tour that started with four highly-acclaimed nights at New York's Bottom Line. The tension between the two is often tangible on a set mixing recent songs with Velvets and solo chestnuts, Lou revelling in his rejuvenated guitar hero status as he rips into the Velvets-like climax of Kill Your Sons but turning to face bassist Fernando Saunders or drummer Fred Maher after Quine detonates the solo of the night on *Waves Of Fear*.

Inter-band frictions aside, this is one of the finest looking and sounding documents of Reed on stage. Or, as he declares in the dressing room afterwards, "short and delicious".

Kris Needs



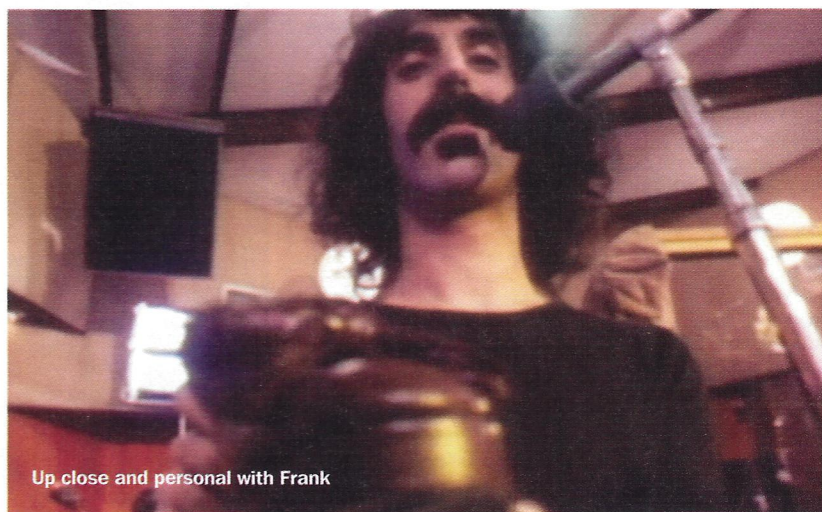
Beside Bowie: The Mick Ronson Story

★★★

MVDvisual MVD 00226 BR (Blu-ray+DVD)

The human behind the Spider From Mars

Mick Ronson deserves every bit of credit that he gets for helping Bowie achieve mega fame in the early 70s. As is noted on *Beside Bowie*, as a lead guitarist he had a rare ability to sound both melodic and ferocious at the same time (check live versions of *Moongate Daydream*), while his skills as an arranger and



Up close and personal with Frank

producer defined The Spiders From Mars' sound as much as anything else – and deserve just as much of a production credit as Bowie for the likes of Lou Reed's *Transformer* album.

But *Beside Bowie* has a bit of a crisis over who its true star is. We're promised a headline "voice over by David Bowie", but really his contributions are taken from a short interview given towards the end of his life: invaluable praise for Ronson, but, at best, short interjections alongside the input of other interviewees. Director Jon Brewer also places himself squarely in the interviewees' chair; he is undeniably informed, sure, but not so much so that it feels anything more than a vanity spot.

Besides, much of the first hour of this is more or less the Bowie story, with added Ronson (and some dodgy animation), rather than an in-depth look at the guitarist's roots. Only post-Spiders do we get more direct focus on Ronson himself: the ill-fated solo career, various production duties, a struggle to make ends meet. Key post-Bowie roles with Dylan and Morrissey are sped through with little insight, though, so that the documentary might have been more accurately subtitled *The Bowie Bits Of The Mick Ronson Story*.

Most touching are the latter-day interviews with the man himself, in which the warmth and personality everyone else talks about are abundant. Ronson, clearly, was a gem until the end – though while everyone is right to sing his praises, it's also unmistakably apparent that, as much as he had

a role in making Bowie the rock god of the early 70s, it's Bowie who also enabled Ronson to unleash his full potential. *Inky Tuscadero*

Scream For Me Sarajevo

★★★★

Prime Time, cat no tbc (DVD)

Tales from the rock'n'roll front line

Irrespective of your musical tastes, this documentary, recipient of a Human Rights Award at the 2016 Sarajevo Film Festival, is as stark a portrayal of music's ability to inspire and comfort those caught in even the most harrowing of situations (in this case the siege of Sarajevo, at the height of the Bosnian war, during the freezing winter of 1994) as you're likely to see.

The work of a team of Bosnian filmmakers, *Scream For Me Sarajevo* is narrated by survivors of the war (some of them teenagers at the time), the UN and military personnel who decided to act on the wild notion of staging a concert for those isolated by the siege, and the musicians who risked a trip through a warzone to play gigs on the frontline, in this case Bruce Dickinson and his solo band.

Brutal wartime footage contrasts with the contemporary interviews and return visits to the site of the show, as audience, organisers and band recount genuinely affecting memories of the event and the war itself, creating a striking impression of the bravery and indomitable spirit of the Bosnian people in the face of what one humanitarian worker describes as "fascistic... almost medieval" persecution. *Rich Davenport*

DOA: A Right Of Passage

★★★

MVD Visual, cat no tbc

(DVD + Blu-ray)

Dead set on destruction and now available for home viewing

The venerable *New York Times* once opined that *DOA: A Right Of Passage* was "as much of a Woodstock as punk may ever inspire", yet if we may be so bold, referring to it as the genre's *Gimme Shelter* seems more appropriate.

Compiled primarily from handheld camera footage of Sex Pistols' ill-fated January '78 US tour shot by directors Lech Kowalski and High Times founder Tom Forcade, *DOA* was intended to celebrate punk at its peak. Instead, the film captured its death throes, with Sid Vicious hurtling off the rails and the Pistols imploding after their shambolic last stand in San Francisco.

Despite a new HD transfer for its long-awaited DVD debut, it's still reassuringly warts'n'all, with the in-concert segments retaining their edge and the candid boudoir interview with Nancy Spungen and a badly smacked-out Vicious remaining genuinely eerie – and more than a little ghoulish.

Also worthy of applause is the directors' attempt to place punk in a wider transatlantic context via the inclusion of lesser-seen footage of Generation X, The Dead Boys and Sham 69, though it's a shame the excessive airtime granted to doltish London punk wannabes Terry & The Idiots dilutes the impact of this otherwise iconic flick. *Tim Peacock*