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David Bowie: Rare and Unseen

Score: **80%**
 Rating: **Not Rated**
 Publisher: **MVD Entertainment Group**
 Region: **A**
 Media: **DVD/1**
 Running Time: **64 Mins.**
 Genre: **Documentary/Live Performance/Independent**
 Audio: **Stereo Sound**

Features:

- UNSEEN: Candid Admissions on Drugs and the Berlin Days
- UNSEEN: Janet Street-Porter Backstage Before Gig
- RARE: New York Interview 1999
- UNSEEN: RUSSELL HARTY Interview Restored for 16:9



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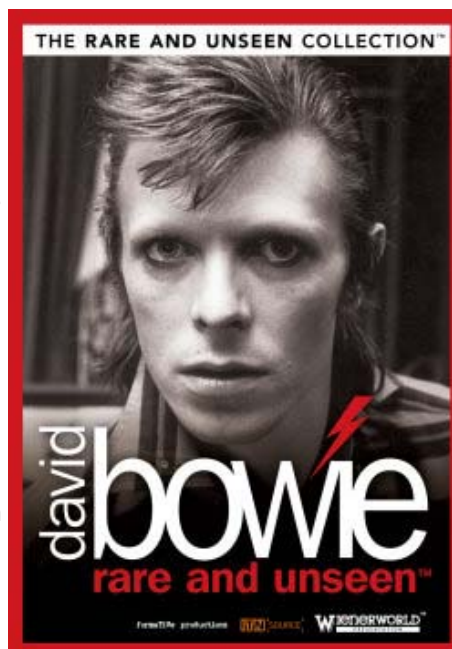
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David Bowie is the rare type of artist that continually morphs over his career, moving through several distinct periods that may be completely different. In his case, these are musical styles, and we're reminded of a musician like Miles Davis, who moved through at least three unique styles in his lifetime. Bowie is still with us, and he's moved through at least as many styles within the rock world as Davis in jazz. **David Bowie: Rare and Unseen** gives fans a chance to view first-hand interviews with the man, both in the past-history and relatively current timeframe. It's a strange trip and only somewhat put into context by the Bowie-of-today, so prepare to be taken along a rather twisty path before the credits roll.

The first comment we'd make is that the credits roll pretty quickly, as in there isn't all that much content here. Several short interviews and one long television appearance are stitched together to make **David Bowie: Rare and Unseen** a one-hour show that exposes material casual fans will never have seen. Dedicated fans may have caught these interviews, but in a much lower fidelity than their restored 16:9 glory. An appearance on the Russell Harty show and time spent backstage with Janet Street-Porter are the crown jewels of **Rare and Unseen**, but there's a good amount of more recent footage (NYC, 1999) that gives important context to the earlier material. Bowie in the late '90s is looking back two decades and commenting on the price of fame, citing recovery from earlier drug use and the challenges of coping with success. The interview with Harty is almost unintelligible in places, which may be drug-induced or simply a function of Bowie's discomfort with the spotlight. Without his glam persona and the comfort of a stage surrounding him, Bowie comes across as a bit childish. Harty



doesn't help matters by throwing out some ridiculous questions.

The interviews with Street-Porter and the later New York interview show a rather different Bowie, still not taking himself very seriously, which includes not inflating himself to grandiose proportions as an artist. There's obviously some ego at play, but it's not evident at a surface level when Bowie talks. His repudiation of drugs and his comments on the damage they did to artists around him is coupled with the idea that he doesn't regret passing through his personal hardships. The "survival" theme brought up in the '99 interview certainly ties in to the reality of Bowie's early days on the scene, scrambling to make a name for himself. **David Bowie: Rare and Unseen** is exactly what it advertises, and will make Bowie fans very happy. The decision to include "Bowie impressions" as musical interludes was a poor choice, but we can imagine the challenge of producing a music documentary without any music... Even with this demerit, **Rare and Unseen** remains worth the investment for Bowie fans.

-Fridtjof, GameVortex Communications
AKA Matt Paddock

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