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REVIEW: DERAILROADED

Written by Rev. Syung Myung Me, on 26-04-2011 00:00

Published in : [Reviews](#), [Film](#)

I've been waiting 6 years for



Image via Wikipedia

Derailroaded to come out on DVD, and I'm very happy to report that it finally has. The only way it could be better is if it came out with the [Frank Zappa](#)-produced *An Evening With Wild Man Fischer*, but I don't think we'll see a reissue of that in my lifetime. For those of you who aren't familiar, *Derailroaded* is the documentary on outsider musician (and, honestly, great songwriter) [Larry](#)

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Frank Zappa, who recorded a 2-LP album with him. One disc recorded more or less by Larry, the other recorded back by the Mothers of Invention. After the initial release, he had a falling out with Zappa and the album's been returned to the vaults and hasn't left since. But that wasn't the end of Larry's career; about 10 years later, he hooked up with Rhino Records and cut the very first record on that label, "Go To Rhino Records". After another LP with Rhino, he collaborated with Barnes & Barnes on two more LPs and various other recordings, all of which were released on the inaugural Rhino Handmade release *The Fischer King*, bringing it all full-circle.

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As for the documentary -- it's VERY good... and, very, very sad, but that goes with the territory, given Larry's schizophrenia. At first I wasn't sure -- for a second I was afraid it was going to be a "Hey lookit the freak!" type thing (mainly at the beginning when they have Art Barnes saying that there's some of his songs that are just heart-wrenching and beautiful and bash-cutting back to "Merry Go Round" without actually mentioning any of the songs that *are* heart-wrenching and beautiful, like "Oh, God, Send Me A Kid", making it sound like Art was being facetious), but immediately after that passed, I realized that the director really did seem to understand Larry and was able to correctly combine the humor and (extreme) pathos in his story.

I really liked the Interview segments, too -- especially with Barnes and Barnes. (One of my friends, who's only a casual fan of Barnes and Barnes, said that from watching that album, he thought Art and Artie'd be really cool to know in real life. "They GET it SO much" is what he said. And I am inclined to agree.)

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REC'D MEDIA

One of the most important things the film did was remind me just how *good* Larry's stuff *is*. It'd been a while since I'd listened to the records, but hearing the songs in the film just unlocked them and I was silently singing along throughout the film. If an artist were deserving of a tribute album, it's Wild Man Fischer. (Though, apparently covers of his songs aren't entirely unknown; there was a UK TV



series that used a cover of "Merry Go Round" as its theme song.)

If you're a Barnes and Barnes fan or Wild Man Fischer fan -- you *must* see *Derailroaded*. In fact, if you are, there's a good chance you've been waiting, like me, for it to finally come out on DVD. If you're not a fan -- *Derailroaded* might just make you into one. Even if you somehow come out not liking Larry's music -- you'll come out liking his story and this excellent film. It's very well done -- a film that's both incredibly funny without being exploitative or mean and incredibly heartbreaking. There were times I almost cried. This is a wonderful, wonderful film I cannot recommend enough.

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