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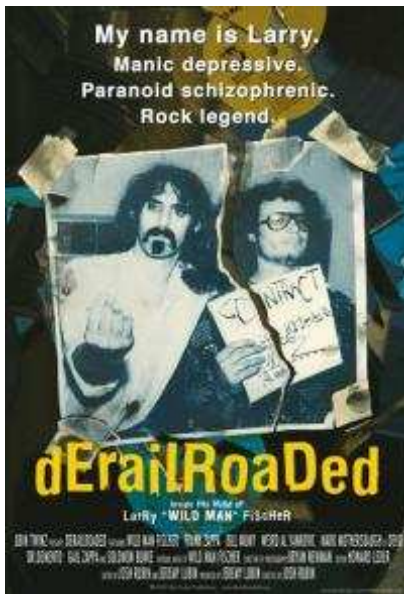
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'Rebel' Rod's Reviews – "Derailroaded – Inside the Mind of Larry "Wildman" Fischer" – DVD

- Posted by [Rod Ames](#) on March 20, 2011 at 2:00pm
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By 'Rebel' Rod Ames

“Derailroded – Inside the Mind of Larry “Wildman” Fischer” is an incredible documentary taking the viewer on an extremely candid excursion into the mind of a manic-depressive-paranoid-schizophrenic, and his 15 minutes plus nearly 20 years of fame.

Discovered by Frank Zappa in 1965, performing his “Outsider” brand of music, Larry Fischer was lured into the studio to record the Zappa produced “An Evening with Larry “Wildman” Fischer”. After seeing this documentary, I immediately started surfing the web in search of something from that record to listen too. What I found only helped to confirm Mr. Fischer’s notoriously enjoyable brand of music.

According to Mr. Fischer, simply put, he was promised that Mr. Zappa was going to make him a rock star. However, the record only sold about 12,000 copies. Hardly rock star numbers.

Mr. Zappa maintained through out the years that he only told him they would make a record and that he would be happy if it sold a moderate amount, which it did.

Fischer is bitterly angry at the entire ordeal and actually shuts down at the mere mention of Mr. Zappa’s name. Mr. Zappa is long gone, so everything is open to speculation. Had it not been for an incident where Fischer, in one of his unpredictable moments, apparently threw a bottle, narrowly missing Zappa’s toddler, Moon Unit. If not for this incident, Fischer may have gone much further, but no one will ever know.

Barnes & Barnes (Robert Haimer and Bill Mummy) of “Fish Heads” fame later noticed “Wildman’s” unique brand of song and spent the next 21 years trying to help someone who was completely unwilling, or perhaps a more objective

way to put it, unable to help himself with his mental instabilities.

As the documentary explains, Mr. Fischer could only create when he was in his "pep"; In other words, when he was on one of his highs he was unstoppable at his creativity. The words to his songs came in floods, but when the "pep" was gone, everything stopped. He literally shut down.

In addition, he refused medication, so his highs would be short lived at best, and his lows frighteningly dark and dismal, resulting in extreme unpredictability.

No one other than his elderly Aunt Josephine would take him in. He made nearly everyone else in his family extremely uncomfortable. As his older Brother David puts it, "He would rapidly get on your nerves". It would often get to the point of tempers flaring, creating the potential for danger. After all, he had come at some of them with a butcher knife on more than one occasion, and at least once at his own mother. Mr. Fischer was utterly convinced that she hated him.

In the documentary, there is an abundance of archival footage consisting of home movies from when he was a child to footage of him on the streets of LA performing his music for a dime. There is footage of his last performance in 2001 with him and his acoustic guitar (which he merely strums-no chords, or uses it as a percussion instrument) performing all the "Wildman" classics.

It also paints a frighteningly stark picture of his descent into his untreated mental illness. This man never chose to live on the streets. The streets of LA were the only location that was willing to accept him. The viewer literally witnesses Mr. Fischer decompensating right before your eyes.

The documentary was directed by Josh Rubin and has appearances from Robert Haimer , Bill Mumy (AKA Banes & Barnes), Solomon Burke, Mark Mothersbaugh (Devo's front man), Barry "Dr. Demento" Hansen, Weird Al Yankovic, Mr. Fischer's older brother David Fischer, and several experts on Mr. Fischer's mental illnesses.

This film is a must see for any audiophile or music historian or, anyone who would like to learn more or who is remotely curious, about debilitating mental illnesses.

It will certainly haunt this reviewer for quite some time. It releases on DVD on March 22nd.

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