

Derailroaded: Inside the Mind of Larry 'Wild Man' Fischer



Dir: Josh Rubin US 85 mins, ICA



Born into a loveless family in 1945 and originally institutionalised at the age of 16 by his hateful mother, Larry Fischer was a product of LA's mid-'60s freak scene, entertaining people on the street with his bizarre leftfield 'songs' of angst and anxiety. More a poet than a musician – his pre-punk 'melodies' are musically impenetrable and involve a lot of weird shouts and

immature squeaks, mostly accompanied by an out-of-tune acoustic guitar that is not so much strummed as bashed – Fischer (more commonly known as Wild Man Fischer) eventually attracted the attention of Frank Zappa who, like many at the time, clearly warmed to this oddball's abstract, often amusing oeuvre. Fischer accompanied Zappa on a tour and eventually cut a solo LP with him (now discontinued), before a bottle-throwing incident stopped their friendship dead. Long diagnosed a paranoid schizophrenic and cruelly experimented upon in the early '60s with shock treatment and other unsavoury methods, Fischer's life has been one long rollercoaster ride, where the downs have far outnumbered the ups. This sensitive, informed and ultimately melancholic bio-doc sums it up very eloquently indeed. *DA*

