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- DVD And Blu-ray Reviews T-Z (330)
- Links Worth Checking (1)
- Live Music (26)
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# Freaks In Love: A Quarter Century In Underground Rock With Alice Donut


by Mark Tolch


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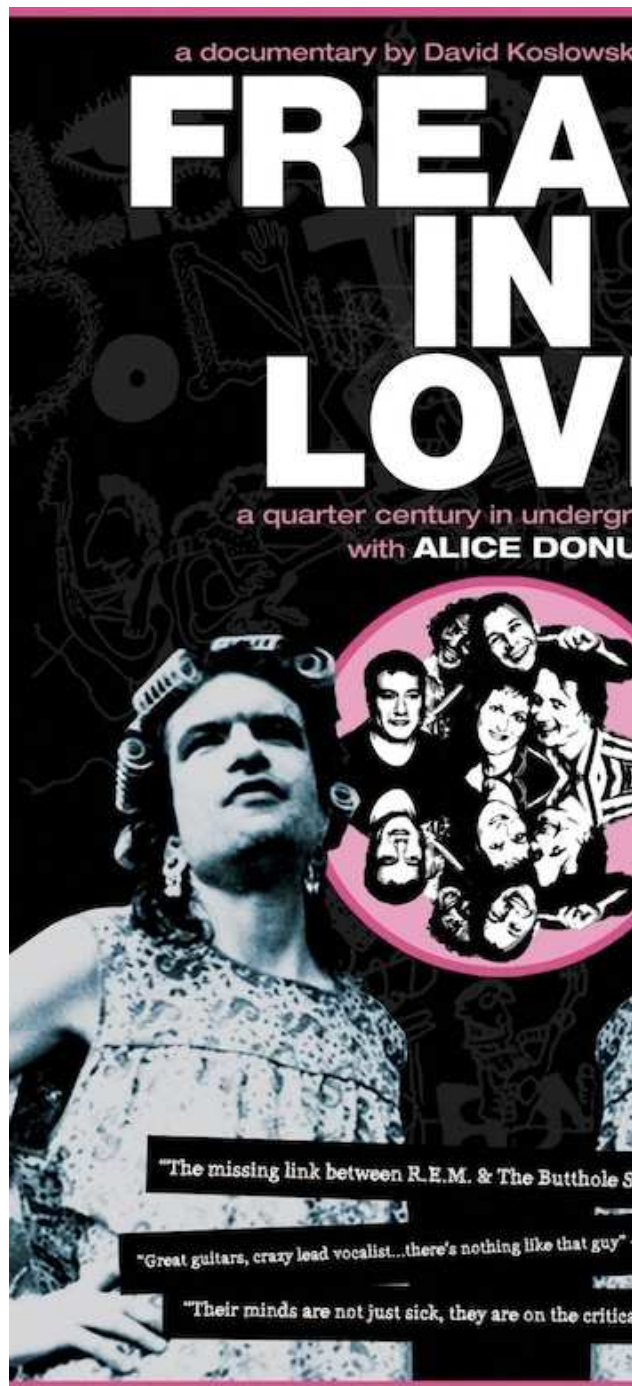
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**Released By:** MVD Visual  
**Released On:** 07/24/2012  
**Director:** David Koslowski, Skizz Czyzk  
**Cast:** Alice Donut, Jello Biafra  
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### The Film:

It's probably robbing me of what little (if any) punk rock cred I have left to admit that I've never listened to Alice Donut. Actually, I've barely even heard of Alice Donut, despite the fact that they were and are championed by Jello Biafra and his label Alternative Tentacles, the source for most of the music I was into growing up. When I sat down to watch *Freaks In Love: A Quarter Century In Underground Rock With Alice Donut*, I had no idea what to expect.

The film starts off at the beginning of a timeline of

sorts, which outlines the social and cultural goings-on in the mid-1980's, a time when Tomas Antona, Ted Houghton, and David Giffen formed the Sea Beasts, performing an eclectic mix of musical weirdness for the New York no-wave and art crowds. By 1987, they had picked up guitarist Michael Jung and drummer Stephen Moses and become Alice Donut, a truncated version of their original name Alice Donut Liver Henry Moore; a mutation of a Martin Scorcese title that the band happened to be watching on TV. Picking up gigs on the Lower East Side of NYC, including the legendary CBGB's, Alice Donut railed against the popular music of the day and released the demo, "Dork Me Bangladesh", which got the attention of Jello Biafra and Alternative Tentacles, who referred to the band as, "The missing link between REM and The Butthole Surfers." They released "Donut Comes Alive" the following year and got themselves some radio play and a small but loyal following.





Alice Donut seemed to be on a pretty good kick for the next few years, putting out such influential albums as 1989's *Bucketfulls of Sickness and Horror in an Otherwise Meaningless Life*, *Mule*, and *Revenge Fantasies of the Impotent*. With the explosion of Nirvana and other "alternative" bands, it seemed that Alice Donut would break huge, touring with Blind Melon, playing to huge crowds in Europe and even making it on to the stage at the Reading Festival, but it was not to be. Lineup changes, infighting, and some bizarre album releases like 1995's "Pure Acid Park" kept the band on the shadowy side of success, and they ultimately broke up after the album's release, not to reform and put out another album until 2004's "Three Sisters LP". Alice Donut continues to soldier on, though they haven't been seen live since September of 2011.

*Freaks in Love* does a pretty thorough job of following the band from the beginning of their career to their not-so-productive present, using a montage of photos, live footage, music videos, and recent interviews to tell the story. Utilizing the aforementioned timeline, filmmakers David Koslowski and Skizz Cyzyk set the story of Alice Donut from their inception to their demise and reformation against the more significant events that unfolded during the band's creative years, connecting the happenings in the world to events in the band member's lives and the subject matter of their albums. Like the band, the film is both humorous and cynical, and manages to assault the viewer with faster paced cuts, visuals, and soundbites, ensuring that *Freaks in Love* is NEVER boring. Not content to focus primarily on live material (like the 2004 DVD release, "London, There's a Curious Lump in my Sack"), the

interviews with the players get down to the bones of what makes them do what they do, and strips away any rock star personas by examining their very personal problems and relationships. All in all, *Freaks in Love* does exactly what a good documentary should do; presents the subject matter in an unbiased but compelling and entertaining manner.



#### Video/Audio/Extras:

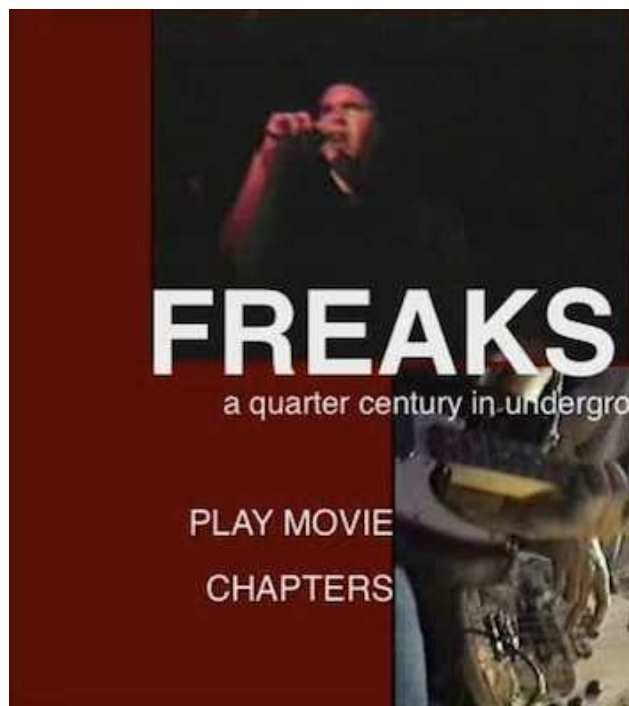
MVD Visual presents *Freaks In Love: A Quarter Century In Underground Rock With Alice Donut* on DVD in a 1.78:1 anamorphic aspect ratio. The video is a mixed bag, using a wide variety of sources from beat to hell VHS to more recent

video stock, but it looks as good as it should, and the choppy bits never distract from the film. The Dolby Digital 5.1 surround track opens up the film nicely, with good use of the subwoofer and moderate surround action. A respectable balance of audio between the sources is also appreciated, with no ugly jump-out moments as more sombre interview footage gives way to adventurous live footage, and vice-versa.

A trailer for the film can be found in the Extras menu, as well as 10 Deleted Scenes that are interesting to see and run about thirteen minutes. Also included are 9 Additional Songs that were not featured in the film.

The Final Word:

As I said, I didn't know what to expect heading into *Freaks in Love*, but it's safe to say that it made me a fan of Alice Donut. Fans of the band, and fans of music in general would be doing themselves a favour in checking it out.











Categories: Live Music Tags : a quarter century in underground rock with, alice donut, alternative tentades, cbgb, david koslowski, documentary, dvd review, freaks in love, independent, jello biafra, meat puppets, music, mvd visual, new york, punk rock, skizz cyzyk

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Andrew Monroe - 10-24-2012, 12:23 PM Reply

Not well versed in the catalog but I do **love** Magdalene. Killer tune. I would be into checking this out, it brings back fond memories of a fun era. Cool review!



Mark Tolch - 10-24-2012, 01:06 PM Reply

glad you enjoyed it. it's a really nicely done doc, and as I mentioned, compelling. i've had "Donut Comes Alive" playing pretty much non-stop for the past few days.

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