



Subscribe

Most Read

- [Rick Nielsen - Cheap Trick](#)
- [SLUGFEST 2 – Alma Street, Abertillery - 7th & 8th August 2009](#)
- [A Life In Music # 2 by Lord Zion of SPiT LIKE THiS](#)
- [Mott The Hoople - Monmouth, Blake Theatre - 25/26th September 2009](#)
- [Paul Crook - Interview Exclusive](#)

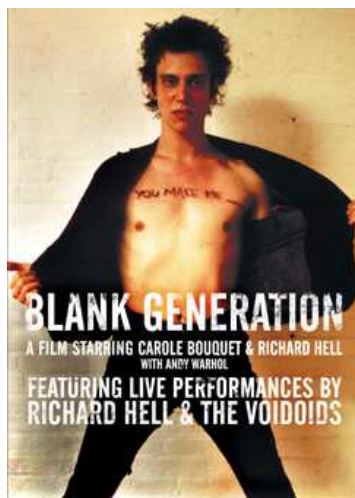
Related Articles

- [Sean Pierce - Toilet Boys](#)
- [C.J Ramone – Swansea, Sin City - 14th August 2009](#)
- [Crash Street Kids - 'Transatlantic Suicide' \(Virgin Records\)](#)
- [Anti-Nowhere League/All The Bodies - Plymouth, The Hippo - 29th October 2009](#)
- [Grant Hart – 'Hot Wax' \(Condor/MVD\)](#)
- [Rock Urban Legends](#)
- [The Master Plan - 'Maximum Respect' \(Nicotine Records\)](#)
- [The Strangers - 'Decades Apart' \(EMI\)](#)
- [Brijitte West - Interview Exclusive](#)
- [Drop Dead Rock \(MVD Visual\)](#)
- [Motion City Soundtrack - 'My Dinosaur Life' \(Columbia\)](#)

## Blank Generation (MVDvisual)

Written by Gaz E

Sunday, 28 March 2010 05:00



MVD Visual offer up this "classic punk rock movie" in re-released form with the draw being some cool live footage of Richard Hell & The Voidoids. Why centre on these performances? Because the movie itself is as much crap as it is a curio. But curio it is, and rightly so because it is a crazy mishmash of pop culture icons, Academy Award nominees and future Ramones.

The plot, if there really is one, revolves (sort of) around a French reporter named Nada who is in New York to record a series of bad interviews on tank-size video equipment. She interviews an up and coming (in spurts) punk rocker called Billy, played with minimalist acting talent by Richard Hell, and thereby begins a volatile relationship with him. Nada is played - in various degrees of lameness - by Carole Bouquet whose looks outnumber her acting ability in this movie by about 80 to 1. Her next movie after this was James Bond flick 'For Your Eyes Only' and she carved out a career in cinema that you find hard to believe when watching her badly pronounce shit dialogue in 'Blank Generation.' She later turned up in an episode of televisual tampon 'Sex In The City.' But I digress; Nada's lover (played by director Ulli Lommel) turns up in NYC, on a seemingly fruitless quest to acquire an interview with Andy Warhol, and the French beauty must decide if she wants to stick with him or get stuck by the cool looking punk rocker. And that is the basic (pun intended) plot outline.

To pad out the movie to (almost) feature length, Lommel uses the same few Voidoids songs many times over and fills the flick with a multitude of unrelated scenes that has the project stumbling into a pretentiousness that is probably befitting of it. These scenes are incoherent and of little to no use to the plot of the movie. The attempts at humour are as funny as a funeral and the acting is of a quality that has yet to be added to the bottom of the proverbial barrel. There is a naive charm to some of the performances - the kids looking past the camera waiting for their cue to throw confetti at the band during a performance at CBGB's and then looking really pleased when they do it is a personal favourite - but the 'straight' performances are pretty abysmal. Attempts at social commentary in the dialogue - "Giving each family a video is like giving each family a gun" - fall like a shit skier when delivered with the passion of a mannequin.

So why should you check this out? There are a few redeeming features, thankfully. For Richard Hell fans, the live footage of the band (featuring a drummer named Mark Bell who would later adopt the surname 'Ramone') is very good and Hell maintains an ice-cool persona throughout the whole affair, even if his acting chops are rotten. The vintage footage of CBGB's is great and will in itself forge a place for this disc in the collections of the cool kids. The eventual appearance of Andy Warhol gives the film almost mythical qualities that is really doesn't deserve - Warhol's performance (if you can really call it that - he is just Andy Warhol) is the finest on show....easily.

The real stars of the film are Edward Lachman's cinematography and the score by Elliot Goldenthal. The scenes of the Lower East Side filmed in January and February 1978 (although the movie wasn't released until 1980) offer a real window into another time and are worth the purchase price alone. A shot of Richard Hell leaving CBGB's and walking the snow-covered streets accompanied by the subtle score is truly a thing of wonder and belonging of a better movie. Every exterior shot that utilises the score instead of the dire-logue is fantastic. It came as little surprise to find that both Lachman and Goldenthal have achieved great success in their careers since the release of 'Blank Generation' - in 2003 Lachman was nominated for an Academy Award for his work on 'Far From Heaven' and Goldenthal went one better, winning the Oscar for his work on the Salma Hayek movie 'Frida.'

The DVD transfer on this Region 0 disc is (in keeping with the movie) pretty poor, but don't let that worry you - this is the charm of some retro releases and could you really expect a film that is centred on bad video recordings to look great? There is only one extra on this disc but, boy, is it worth its weight in gold! An all-new interview with Richard Hell talking about the film to the writer Luc Sante is advertised as being better than the actual movie and I would have to agree.

Hell, now looking like Elvis Costello wearing horror teeth, is pretty scathing in his attacks on director Ulli Lommel who, after making cult horror flick 'The Boogeyman', quickly descended into



making straight to video serial killer schlock. Hell describes the making of the movie as "painful and infuriating" and says that he gets really embarrassed and ashamed regarding the film. He talks about his acting and, when discussing musicians trying to act, says that he was not quite as bad as Bob Dylan. He cites Mick Jagger's turn in 'Performance' and John Lydon's role in Harvey Keitel starrer 'Order Of Death' as rare rock star acting successes. He also says that Lydon was actually present at the recording of the live footage of the Voidoids at CBGB's although he was not caught on camera.

He remains inspired by the work of Lachman and Goldenthal and, those aside, believe that the movie's only saving grace is the performance footage of his band. The interview, running around forty minutes, is hilarious and of a rare breed; a DVD extra that gives the related movie an almost complete panning! A great interview and the perfect companion piece to the film.

As a movie 'Blank Generation' stinks. As a piece of punk rock history it is of real interest. As a document of another age, it has real moments of awe-inspiring quality. The New York City of 1978 captured on film is a grimy, sleazy relic and that footage will be the reason why this disc will return to my player in the future.

---

[News](#) | [CD Reviews](#) | [Gig Reviews](#) | [Hell's Gigs](#) | [Interviews](#) | [Features](#) | [Retrö Röck](#) | [Störe](#) | [Förüm](#) | [Cöntact](#)  
[Terms and Conditions](#) | [News Updates](#)  
Design by Probros © 2009 über röck