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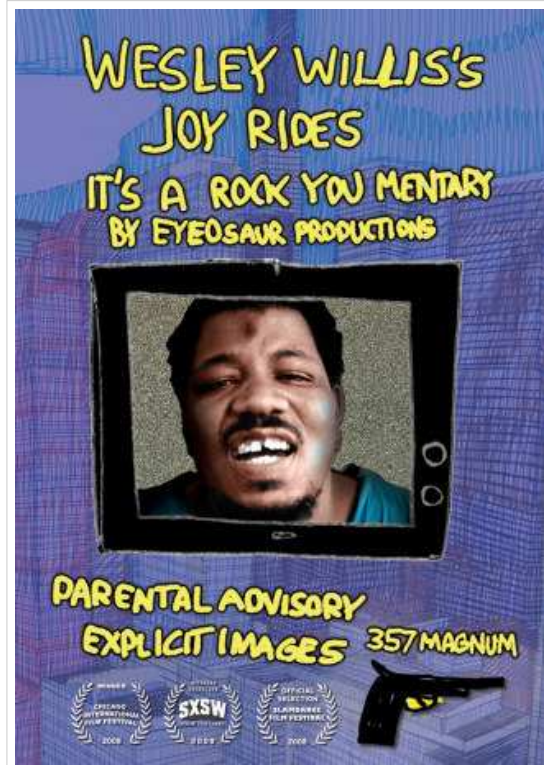
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who

the guy even was, but anyone that lived in Chicago in the mid-'90s probably had their forehead pressed to his as he said "Rah!" Willis created art both musical and visual, and could be found all over the place peddling his creations to anyone and everyone.

While Willis was mentally unwell, he was a diagnosed schizophrenic, the local -- and then wider -- musical community embraced him for the passion he threw into his rambling odes to the everyday backed by repetitive Casio synth melodies. Improbably, in 1996 one of his albums was released by a Major label as he was swept up in the feeding frenzy following the buzz of The Smashing Pumpkins, Veruca Salt, and Liz Phair. This move didn't diminish the love of his fan base though, and when widespread super-stardom was obviously not going to happen he returned to self-releasing the majority of his output.

His life is remembered in the documentary *Wesley Willis's Joy Rides*, coming out on DVD next week on December 8, and we recommend checking it out whether it's to reignite old memories or just gain a simple understanding of a singular character in rock and/or roll you may be unfamiliar with. *The Empty Bottle* will be screening the documentary for free this Sunday, December 6, so take the opportunity to celebrate Willis' complicated life with folks that knew him and newly appreciative fans.

Check out the trailer for the film after the jump.





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By Tankboy in Arts & Events on December 4, 2009 4:40 PM

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