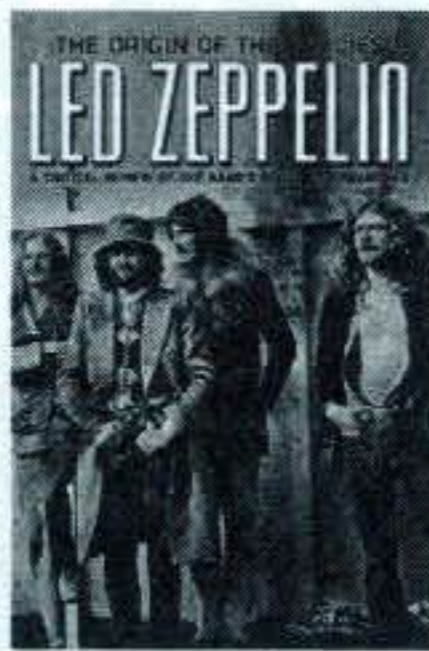


LED ZEPPELIN – The Origin of the Species: A Critical Review of the Band's Roots and Branches (Chrome Dreams/Sexy Intellectual)

Although not entitled such, *The Origin of the Species*, is another in Chrome Dreams' hit-and-miss *Under Review* series. This one turns out to be more hit than miss, tracking Led Zep's story from its early-60s roots up until the making of the second album. As with previous DVDs in this series, there's an array of

Brit rock crits (in this case, Chris Welch, Alan Clayton, Keith Altham, Barney Hoskyns, Phil Sutcliffe and Paolo Hewitt) giving the proceedings a *Mojo* magazine flavor. Their opinions and insights are supported by anecdotes from various



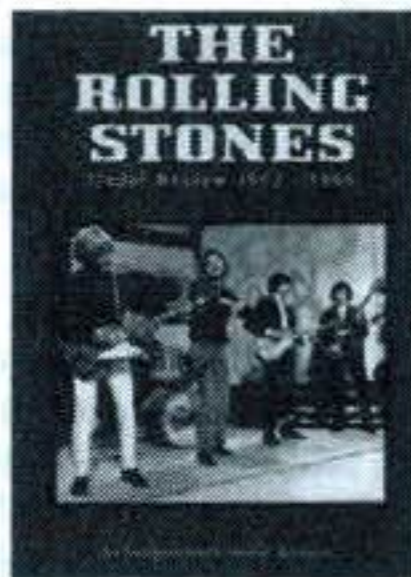
musicians with links to the pre-Zep era, including Clem Cattini, Dave Berry, Chris Farlowe and the delightfully articulate Chris Dreja.

The main reason to watch, though, is for the vintage footage, including a pre-adolescent Jimmy Page being interviewed on TV and playing with a skiffle group, a jaw-dropping excerpt of the Beck-Page era Yardbirds doing "Happenings Ten Years Time Ago" that was new to me, and a truly ferocious clip of early Zeppelin lip-synching to "Communication Breakdown" on Swedish TV. Too bad these performances couldn't have been included in their entirety, perhaps as part of the DVD bonus features. Instead, there is a "Special Feature: The Story of the Yardbirds," which is not, as one might expect, a bonus documentary, but rather just straight, unadorned interview footage of Chris Dreja relating the band's history. (MS)

THE ROLLING STONES – Under Review 1962-1966 (Chrome Dreams/Sexy Intellectual) DVD

As with much of the *Under Review* series, this serves as an adequate beginners' guide to its subject without providing any particularly profound new insights.

The assorted writers and historians provide articulate commentary alongside a mostly familiar parade of still photos, stock footage and TV clips for a methodical disc by disc plod through the Stones' discography from "Come On" to "Have You Seen Your Mother Baby, Standing in the Shadow?"



The quality of the live clips is sometimes less than optimum, an out-of-sync "It's All Over Now" from *The Red Skelton Show* being particularly poor, but there's no denying the excitement of some of the footage, including an electrifying "Not Fade Away" from the 1964 NME Pollwinners Concert, and a live version of "Satisfaction" from a German concert, which I'd never seen before.

The proceedings are enhanced by interview material with Dick Taylor, Stones insider (and crime scene cover-up man) Tom Keylock and Chris Farlowe, but overall this 90-minute documentary could easily have been pruned down to 60 minutes by picking up the pace of the editing a little, for example, dispensing with the clichéd segue shots of records loading onto jukeboxes and various tape recorder parts in motion every time a new song is introduced.

The bonus material consists of the usual contributor biographies, trivia quiz and a few unspectacular minutes of extra interview material with Keylock and Keith Altham. (MS)



Mick and Keith party in Malmö Sweden, 1965, along with members of the Gonks and the Nameloseers.

ROLLING LIKE A STONE (Auto Images AB, Sweden)

Upon first glance of the packaging and title, one is led to believe that this is a Swedish documentary of the Rolling Stones June 29, 1965 Malmö concert. In essence, it is based on a recently discovered home movie of a private party held at the home of Ola Strom of the Gonks, attended by Keith Richards, Mick Jagger and Brian Jones following the Stones last show of that date.

The liner notes (translated from Swedish to English) sum it up: "Forty years later, we meet the same people [who were present at the party, and in the short feature: all members of the Nameloseers, Gonks, and assorted groovy chicks who are obviously Stones and Nameloseers groupies] to see how their lives developed. *Rolling Like A Stone* is a documentary about people whose identity was shaped during a few years in the middle of the '60s, but it's also a film about how difficult it can be growing older with your dreams and be able to live in present times."

For sure, as you watch the trials and tribulations of Tommy Hansson, lead singer of the Nameloseers, unfold along with that of Ola Strom of the Gonks, a woman named Mona (a model, and a Brian Jones groupie who in her heyday had similar elements to a 1965 Marianne Faithfull), and a woman named Kerstin (a Nameloseers groupie), it is depressing in a way as they serve to remind us all of things that plague everyone sooner or later: unemployment, divorce, old age, and ultimately death and dying.

On the up side, the film is well done and well researched. For those of us looking for another glimpse of the Stones, there are some fantastic stones unturned here: short and sweet, but dynamite footage from the Stones Baltiska Halle show (the last of the two shows), in color, where you can see Keith wailing on his Epiphone Casino; some black and white silent backstage footage, with Brian tuning his Vox Teardrop; the Radio Syd audio interviews with Mick and Brian (the Radio Syd broadcasts were transmitted from a boat!) with some unseen stills of Brian and Mick on board; the Stones arrival at the airport; and of course the home movie of the Stones at the after-show party from which Swedish film makers Stefan Berg and Magnus Gerten developed the concept for this documentary.

Other positive vibes would include lots of little snips of the Nameloseers in action onstage; the Gonks Beatlesque home movies; and an excerpt from a Nameloseers reunion for the 40th Anniversary of their mid-60s hangout Klubb Bongo (they do "Land of 1000 Dances"), the late, great bassist and singer Christer Nilsson's last stage appearance.

Some fantastic bonus material includes rare footage of the 1965 Klubb Bongo scene; interviews with all or most of the other people in the home movie; and the best for last; a film of the Nameloseers in

THE INVASION OF THE THUNDERBOLT PAGODA (Bastet/Arthur/Saturnalia)

According to director Ira Cohen, *The Invasion of the Thunderbolt Pagoda* is an "allegorical" film and definitely "not what you'd call an action picture." In the first scene a group of NY's avant elite, in fanciful costumes such as a "stoned out king" and "the white snake," carouse about in the director's Prince Street studio. As Cohen describes it in the editor's commentary, it's a "magical communal coming together," distortedly filmed in reflective Mylar screens. This commentary can be amusing. When one figure lights a candle sticking out between another's legs, Cohen quips, "I thought that was very sexy?"

Does it give you a charge?" At other times his blunt commentary ("there's some opium smoking going on") is amusingly obvious. We do learn who these performers are behind their masks. There's Peter Birnbaum who had been in India living as a sadhu for several years. And there's violinist Tony Conrad. At one point, Cohen points out Angus MacLise playing hand drums as Death dances circles around him and his wife Hetty.

MacLise's ensemble, Joyous Lake, is responsible for the sound portion of the film. Recorded live at St. Mark's Church in 1968 for the film's premiere—with Hetty, Conrad, Loren Standlee, Henry Flynt, Raja Samyana, and others improvising on guitar, tape echo, recorder, and "limp string"—it's an "intense score," with Angus "beating the hell out of his hand drums as voices, dulcimers and tamera swirl around on a basis of repetitious organ drone." As a founding member of the Theatre of Eternal Music, which included LaMonte Young, Warhol protégé Billy Name, Conrad, and John Cale, MacLise was a noted figure in the pre-superstar NY art scene. He predated Mo Tucker as drummer of the Velvet Underground, recorded various experimental scores for filmmakers like Gerard Malanga and Jonas Mekas, and organized the infamous Dream Weapon "happenings" before relocating to Katmandu and immersing himself in poetry and opiates.

Deep bows and curtsies to the folks at *Arthur* mag for allowing this astonishing film to squint again at the light of day. Oh, and for those wussies not feeling MacLise's stony vibe, the DVD also comes with two optional soundtracks, a live Acid Mothers Temple composition from 2003, and a brand new one by Sunburned Hand of the Man. (Eric Bluhm)

