

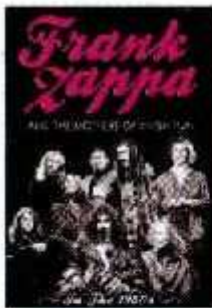
MOJO *The Music Magazine*

Frank Zappa And The Mothers Of Invention



In The 1960s CHROME DREAMS

Two-and-a-quarter hours on
Zappa's superfreak decade.



It's 1963 and Zappa, 22 but looking younger – clean-shaven, grinning shyly, dressed in suit and tie like a trainee bank manager – is on the Steve Allen variety show, playing a bicycle. He blows the handlebars, bows the spokes – you can just picture a 13-year-old Tom Waits in front of his TV, salivating. The following year, entrapped into recording an erotic audio tape, Zappa

was jailed for pornography. If this wasn't entirely responsible for the switch from making soundtracks to joining the '60s freak scene (when it suited him), it helped. Maybe it got him out of Vietnam, too, though the documentary doesn't say. Then, despite the length and some fine footage from the era, it doesn't give much sense of Zappa *in* the '60s. Contextualising interviews with peers (besides a caustic Kim Fowley and Zappa band members including Jimmy Carl Black and Art Tripp) would have been more helpful than getting rock historians to tell the story.

Sylvie Simmons