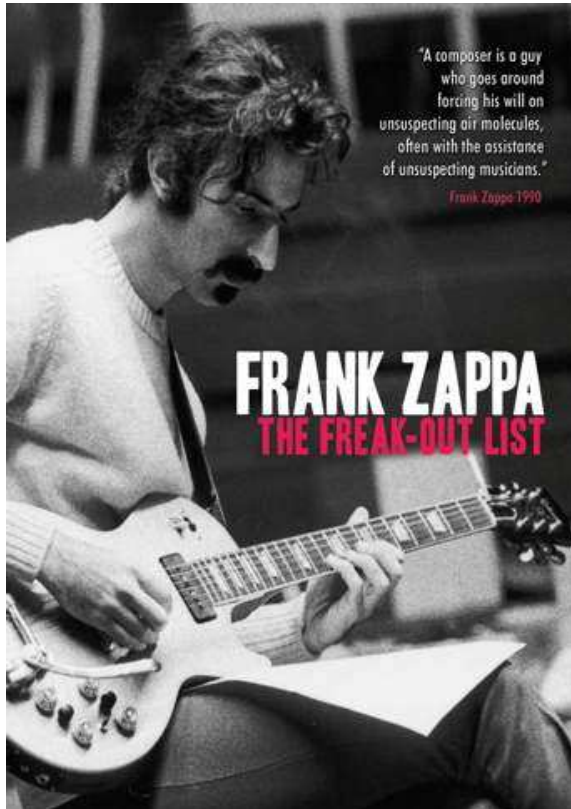




FAME Review: Frank Zappa -The Freak-Out List (DVD)



The Freak-Out List

[Frank Zappa](#)

Sexy Intellectual SIDVD555 (DVD)

Available from [Amazon.com](#).

A review written for the Folk and Acoustic Music Exchange
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I'm not sure who wrote the liner notes to this DVD, but he or she did the disc a bit of a disservice, **seeming** to ref the video as more a focus on the diverse influences that wunderkind Frank Zappa was so enamored of rather than the effect of those primogenitures into his work. The documentary itself, however, I am happy to say, is not like that at all. Rather, **The Freak-Out List**, so named after the debt of gratitude extended a now-famous detailing appearing in the Mothers of Invention debut disc, is an extremely revealing exploration of just how unique the late composer's mind truly was, not to mention being a very nice and rather detailed tip of the derby to the icons credited.

The death of Zappa stands as a true tragedy in the music world, standing in a list that includes the passing of Jimi Hendrix, Nick Drake, Jim Morrison, Janis Joplin, and a few others. Many have perished in the rock milieu, more than a few ignobly, but the list of geniuses cut short in life is especially poignant in that the arts and globe were deprived while all these rebellious souls were in their prime. Indeed, not one of them ever climbed down from Olympic heights, and Zappa had a far far longer run of always-first-rate work than any, dying in his 50s rather than 20s, as the rest had.

It's sad to note that I very strongly suspect he was just another in the appallingly long list of iatrogenic manslaughters the AMA is famous (and self-acknowledegd) for, a tote count that runs into the many millions, but Frank's passing from prostate cancer robbed all and sundry of a subsequent catalogue that would've much further transformed music itself. Of that there's no doubt. In fact, it'll yet be many years before his opuses will have the full effect they should, musically and critically, as humanity as a whole has yet to catch up to him. The glacially slow approval of the always stodgy classical world is lucid enough evidence of that, a validation of his illimitable prowess. Professor David Nichols and several other quite respectable writers in this narrative make that abundantly clear.

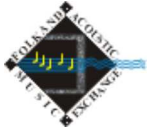
Another label, Eagle Eye, put out a series of documentaries on the making of landmark rock LPs (along with a killer line of concert releases: the Montreux gigs, etc.), and this Sexy Intellectual release stands tall with them, a highly professional DVD with A-1 narration, editing, and incisive analysis, not to mention a wealth of concert shots, rare photos, and etc. Like the provocative **Composing the Beatles Songbook: Lennon & McCartney - 1966 - 1970** ([here](#)) and **Composing Outside the Beatles: Lennon & McCartney - 1967 - 1972** ([here](#)), investigations that go far to cut back the over-accoladization process of Lennon in fairer favor of McCartney, **Freak-Out List** follows a line of inquiry that will redouble even FZ's aficionados' faith as to just how exemplary the Groucho-moustached whizbang really was.

It'll also re-affirm the anarchistic side of Frank well beyond what has already been set in stone. Rarely has such a self-possessed self-motivated individual moved through this world; **Freak-Out List** proves it in spades. The man's discriminatingly non-discriminatory nature saw all forms as just 'music' and in the best Wildean sense: as either good or bad, that was all. And if it was bad, God help ya should your material came awaft his beezzer, as the guy's sniff test was harrowingly spot-on. That isn't covered here, but it was precisely such critical judgement which dictated the masterpieces that so preternaturally flowed from pen and guitar, primordial and uber-sophisticated elements in a mind undeniably elite while ever content to dwell solidly among the outcasts, misfits, and, artists.

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