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MARKET PLACE

Frank Zappa – The Freak Out List (Chrome Dreams/MVD DVD)

Picture: C+ Sound: C+ Extras: C
Documentary: B

When you have watched enough of the excellent series of music documentaries from the British company Chrome Dreams, distributed in the U.S. by Music Video Distributors, you expect nothing but hard to turn away from programs on the most important music artists around. Frank Zappa, ever underrated, is one of them and this second Chrome Dreams/MVD DVD following *The Mother Of Invention In The 1960s* installment is called *The Freak Out List*. This time, it is a complex look at his influences and the results are amazing.

The mix of artists covered include the classical composer Schoenberg, the artists of the 1950s Doo Woo movement including The Cadillacs, Johnny "Guitar" Watson, Jazz, Miles Davis and many others, but the amazing coverage just does not name all of the influences, it shows how the influences work, covers the rarely discussed situations in which they were being made (under duress from racism, snobbery musically and other famous last words types not taking the material seriously enough for instance) and finally begins to link Zappa with many music genres and not just being written off as experimental.

Along with the usual excellent interview segments and licensed music, it gets deeper into the functions of the music and how important Zappa's influences were to all of music beyond any genre. The point made is to say that he is ultimately a serious composer and not just an experimental Rock artist, though I always thought of him as both. I liked the comparisons to what Zappa was doing versus an Emerson, Lake & Palmer and other important artists of the time.

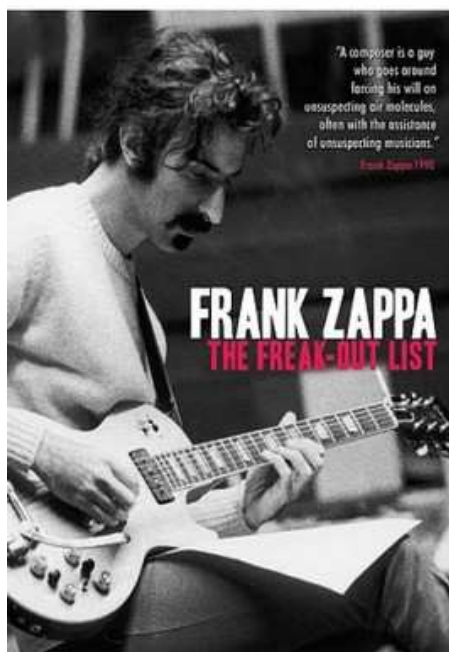
Ultimately, this is one of the widest-ranging installments in this very long, amazing series of programs and if you want to see how excellent a Chrome Dreams music documentary is, *The Freak Out List* is a great place to start.

The 1.33 X 1 image is pretty good throughout, though some stills and older material (analog videotape, for instance) can look aged, especially since this goes back to the 1800s, but that is still typical of any documentary, including one on music. The Dolby Digital 2.0 Stereo is also decent and the original music sounds good, though as usual, I wish we had some multi-channel versions of the music somewhere on the disc. Extras include the usual contributor biographies, plus extended interviews with them and interesting featurette *Frank Zappa's Record Collection*.

For more on Zappa, we recommend you start with **The Mother Of Invention In The 1960s** installment at this link, then follow more links for more Zappa:

<http://www.fulvuedrive-in.com/review/8046/Frank+Zappa+&+The+Mothers+Of+Inv>

- Nicholas Sheffo



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