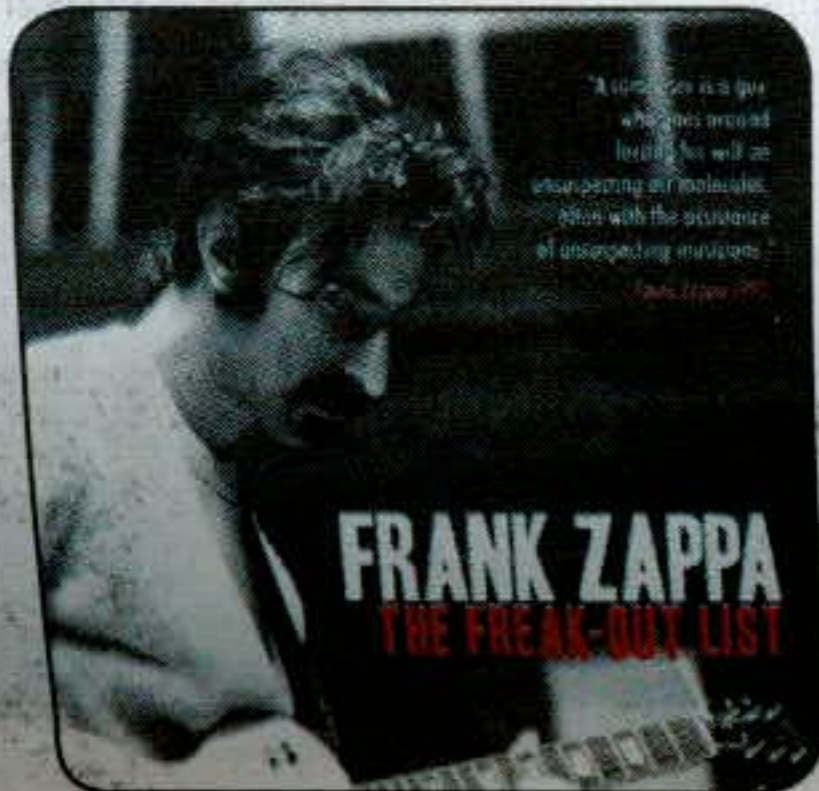


## TUNES [ CD Reviews ]

### Frank Zappa – The Freak-Out List (Sexy Intellectual via MVD Visual)

★★★★



**TODD ZACHRITZ**  
Contributor

Frank Zappa's comprehensive knowledge of music both scholarly and street-level was rather impressive (to say the least), as this unauthorized look at the man's influences covers basically what amounts to a history of 20th century musics.

So, in effect, this DVD is, in itself, a good history lesson. From the early modern classical and avante-classical inspirations of Edgard Varese and Stravinsky to doo-wop, early blues, R&B, and along the path to free jazz and fusion, Zappa always had his fingers on the heart of sound itself.

The man was literally one of the century's greatest artistic minds, and when he left this mortal coil in 1993, he left a legacy of always-smart, often silly, and sometimes outright weird recordings, many of which attest to the genre-bending capabilities of Zappa himself. He brought in a number of since-became-legendary musicians (George Duke, Adrian Belew, Steve Vai, Terry Bozzio, and others) to realize his projects.

Some of these players, peers, writers, and Zappa fans are allowed their say here, and it comes together rather well. *The Freak-Out List* isn't only for avowed Zappa fans... it will make non-fans curious to hear more of this man's seminal works.

-- Todd Zachritz

### Chely Wright –Lifted Off the Ground (Vanguard)

★★★★

Chely Wright made her way into the hearts of country fans with such songs as "Shut Up and Drive" and "Single White Female." In 2005 she released *The Metropolitan Hotel* with 11 of her own original songs that all have a kick to their lyrics;



**KRISTINA KERCHER**  
Contributor

*Lifted Off the Ground* is no different.

*Lifted Off the Ground* straddles the line of traditional country and an indie-folk feel with beautiful guitar pickings and a soft singing voice. "Snow Globe" gives the image of a song someone might sing while sitting around a campfire late at night with lyrics like "Oh, is this a bad dream/Or the best dream/That I've ever had/And, Oh/What is waiting/ Beyond the mirror/Beyond the curtain/Beyond what fades into the black."

The album continues with "Notes to the Coroner" about a woman who has, most likely, committed suicide and left notes of the how and why of her demise. The songs steady drum beat and up-beat rhythm put a twist on the lyrics, almost as if the woman singing is happier now that she is dead.

The song "Broken" is a typical song about a woman who tries her best at life, at relationships, but just doesn't seem to be able to get to where/what she wants.

The album's depressing lyrics may get some people down, but surprisingly, the songs are addictive not only because of the beats of the music, but because the lyrics really catch your heart. Wright says and talks about touchy subjects in such a blunt way that you just can't turn her off.

(Suggestion: Listen to the song "The River" by Chely Wright, released on her last album *The Metropolitan Hotel* which consists of 11 tracks of her own original music and lyrics.)

-- Kristina Kercher

### John Nemeth – Name the Day (Blind Pig Records)

★★★★

"Retro" is a word that gets thrown around a lot when folks discuss clothing, home decor, and especially music. It's hip to be retro, but often, artists can get pigeonholed for having a retro sound, making it difficult for listeners to accept anything outside of that quirky, old-school groove. Then, there are those artists that embrace those classic sounds. John Nemeth stands in the latter category with groups like Sharon Jones and the Dap-Kings and James Hunter as torchbearers for a form of music performance and production that has fallen by the wayside in the last 30-plus years.

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