



[HOME](#) [MUSIC](#) [MOVIES](#) [COMIC BOOKS](#) [THE REST](#) [COLUMNS](#) [BEST OF...](#)

Movie Dept.

- Movie Reviews
- DVD Reviews
- Profiles
- Fest Reviews

Latest From Movies

House (Janus Films, NR)



OSS 117: Lost in Rio (Music Box Films, NR)

Frank Zappa: The Freak-Out List (Sexy Intellectual, NR)

Get Him to the Greek (Universal Pictures, R)

Seattle International Film Festival Report #9

Seattle International Film Festival Report #10

Seattle International Film Festival Report #11

Seattle International Film Festival Report #12

Seattle International Film Festival Report #8

Seattle International Film Festival Report #4

Latest Movies Profiles

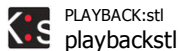
Joe Pilato/Gary Klar | Very Much Alive



Jason Reitman | In Search of the Authentic



Wyatt Weed | Bringing St. Louis Out of the Shadows



on PLAYBACK:stl Review/Photos 2010 Beale St. Music Festival | Memphis in Mud: <http://ow.ly/1Ltvu> 26 days ago

Listening to Kenny Brown at Beale St. Music Fest. Jeff Beck coming up followed by Widespread Panic. AB 40 days ago

Live music editor Amy Burger & Photog Joanna Kleine are en route to the Beale St. Music Fest. Look for live

Frank Zappa: The Freak-Out List (Sexy Intellectual, NR)

Written by Pete Timmermann
Wednesday, 09 June 2010 11:47

| Print |



"The blow of how boring this all is softened somewhat by their better-than-usual choices for visuals to accompany long parts of music that go along with the film."



In the past several weeks two tributes to the role models of my own role models have been released: the book *Role Models* by John Waters, and the documentary *Frank Zappa: The Freak-Out List*, which was released straight to DVD by Sexy Intellectual. This is a trend that I can stand to get on board with; it's a lot of fun to find out how your idols got to be the way that they are.

The Freak-Out List is a reference to a list of inspirations Zappa listed in the liner notes of his band The Mothers of Invention's landmark debut LP from 1966, *Freak Out!* The list in question is of approximately 180 people, which range from writers (Lawrence Ferlinghetti, James Joyce) to famous musicians (Bob Dylan, Elvis Presley) to future collaborators (Don Vliet, Johnny Guitar Watson) to just about anyone else, like someone called 'Donna #2.' What the film *The Freak-Out List* aspires to do is illustrate how these people influenced Zappa's trademark sound, and in doing so, they only focus on a small number of the people on the list. The vast majority of the film is dedicated to classical composers (Igor Stravinsky, Edgar Varese), jazz musicians (Charles Mingus, Miles Davis, with the latter not even being on the titular list), and doo-wop singers.

While they are easily maintaining their good taste in musicians to profile in their DVD releases (previous subjects have included Captain Beefheart, Tom Waits, and The Velvet Underground), Sexy Intellectual sadly has not given up their predilection for stuffy, boring, often pretentious talking heads droning on about topics that you might have cared about going in, but won't pretty soon after you start watching this film. Of the many people interviewed for this film, most of whom are knowledgeable but thoroughly unengaging academics, only former Zappa collaborator George Duke comes off well—the film would have benefited greatly if there had been a lot more people like Duke interviewed in it, or at least if it had more footage of the Duke interview. The blow of how boring this all is softened somewhat by their better-than-usual choices for visuals to accompany long parts of music that go along with the film. These clips include Godfrey Reggio, Stan Brakhage, and even George Lucas films, which come as a welcome visual diversion, and usually fits the music well. (Makes one wonder what *Koyaanisqatsi* would have been like if Zappa had done the music instead of Philip Glass...)

The special features, such as they are, aren't any better. There are illustrated biographies of the boring people from the film, and also an insulting little bit called "Zappa's Desert Island Discs," which is only five minutes long and focuses on just two albums.

It's a shame that this documentary isn't better than it is—the topic is fantastic, and begs to be redone by a student writing a thesis. In fact, I'm sure that's been done before, many times over. Really, it wouldn't have been hard to make this a lot more interesting—I know that if they went through each person on the list the film would be extremely long, but couldn't they find at least a few minutes to discuss what effect Lenny Bruce or Tiny Tim, both of whom are on the freak-out list? | **Pete Timmermann**



Be Social



Photogallery

Graphic Ink

Calendar

Events Page

Give It Away!

News

DVD Reviews

Frank Zappa: The Freak-Out List (Sexy Intellectual, NR)



Honey and Clover Box Set 3 (VIZ Media, T+ for older teens and adults)

Word is Out: Stories of Some of Our Lives (Milestone, NR)

American Artifact: The Rise of American Rock Poster Art (Freakfilms, NR)

Honey and Clover Box Set 2 (VIZ Media, T+ for older teens)



www.chipotle.com



Latest News



City Underground Fest 2010

Monday, 26 April 2010 14:20



Phish 3D Passes St. Louis By

Friday, 16 April 2010 08:55



PLAYBACK on Facebook

Wednesday, 07 April 2010 14:59



Belleville Rallies for Local Music Scene

Wednesday, 07 April 2010 10:22



Music Showcase Moves to Washington Avenue

Monday, 15 March 2010 22:34

Latest From Columns



For the Lover in You

Friday, 12 February 2010 12:24



The Music and Me

Wednesday, 20 January 2010 00:00



Van Morrison | Astral Weeks (Warner Bros. Records, 1968)

Saturday, 26 December 2009 17:00



Ryan Adams | Heartbreaker (Bloodshot Records, 2000)

Saturday, 12 December 2009 17:00



Lullaby for the Working Class | Song (Bar/None Records, 1999)

Saturday, 28 November 2009 17:00

Most Popular on PLAYBACK:stl



Marvel Comics 07.23.08 | An Uncanny Birthday

Monday, 07 July 2008 04:47



Across the Universe (Sony Pictures/Revolution, PG-13)

Friday, 12 October 2007 09:15



Walk Hard: The Dewey Cox Story (Columbia Pictures, R)

Thursday, 20 December 2007 17:00



Never Back Down (Summit Entertainment, PG-13)

Thursday, 13 March 2008 17:00



Marvel Comics 05.14.08 | The Next Generation X

Thursday, 24 April 2008 17:00

[Contact Us](#) • [Advertise With Us](#)

© Copyright 2002-2010, All Rights Reserved - BIGFATCAT, LLC