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[News](#)
[Reviews](#)
[Contests](#)
[Interviews](#)
[Forum](#)
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- [Indiana Jones 5 gets lost in the Bermuda Triangle](#)
- [Get Him to the Greek | Review](#)
- [Captain America: The First Avenger | Concept Art Fist Look!](#)
- [Splice | Review](#)
- [Frank Zappa: The Freak-Out List | Review](#)
- [Guillermo del Toro leaves Middle-Earth](#)
- [The Happy Poet | Fundraising Screening in Austin, TX](#)
- [Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time | Review](#)
- [Sex and the City 2 | Review](#)
- [SPLICE | Advance Screening Giveaway!](#)
- [Vincenzo Natali \(SPLICE\) | Interview](#)
- [Shrek Forever After | Review](#)
- [Garden, The | Review](#)
- [Happiness Runs | Review](#)
- [Blank Generation \(1980\) | Review](#)
- [Exit Through the Gift Shop | Review](#)
- [Robin Hood \(2010\) | Review](#)
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- [Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time | Review](#)
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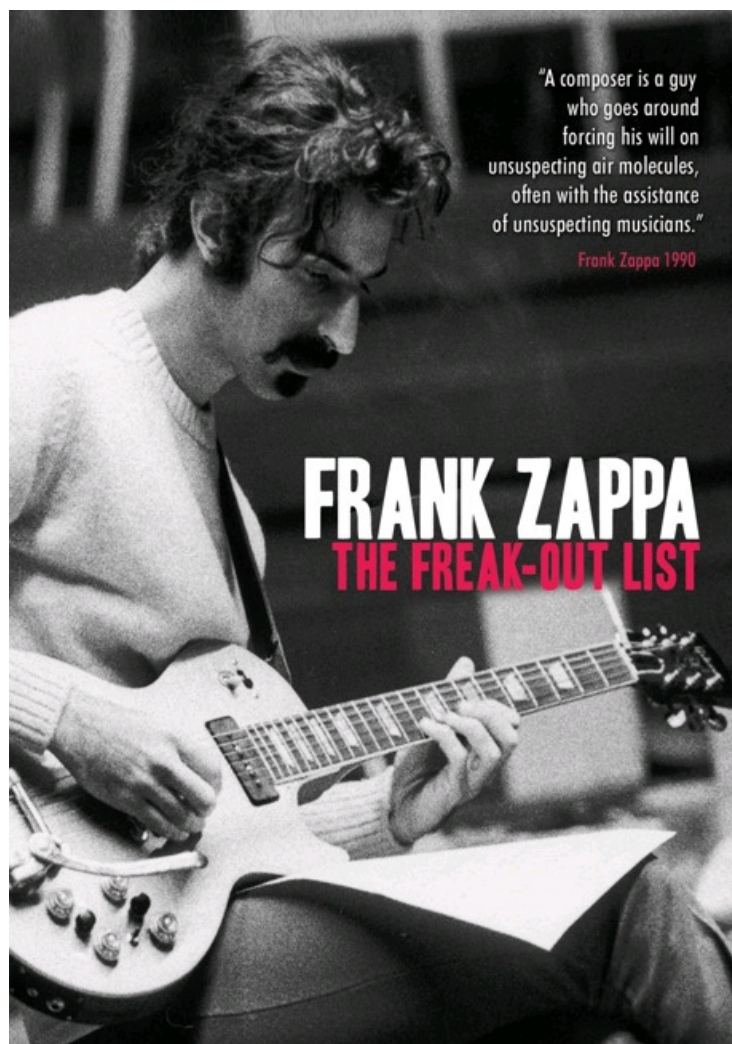
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[Frank Zappa: The Freak-Out List | Review](#)

By [Don Simpson](#) | June 1, 2010



5

Sorry Suzy Creamcheese but I am really not a huge fan of Frank Zappa – although I do admit that I admire and respect his talent. However, I do make one specific exception for Zappa's 1966 debut (with the Mothers of Invention) *Freak Out!* which is one of my favorite albums of that seminal year in music history that also witnessed the release of...

The Beach Boys – *Pet Sounds*

The Beatles – *Revolver*

James Brown – (too many albums to list)

Tim Buckley – *Tim Buckley*

Miles Davis – *Miles Smiles*

Donovan – *Sunshine Superman*

Bob Dylan – *Blonde on Blonde*

Tim Hardin – *1*

The Incredible String Band – *The Incredible String Band*

The Kinks – *Face to Face*

Love – *Love*

The Monkees – *The Monkees*

The Monks – *Black Monk Time*

Otis Redding – *The Soul Album*

The Rolling Stones – *Aftermath*

Nancy Sinatra – *Boots*

The Seeds – *The Seeds*

Small Faces – *Small Faces*

The Sonics – *Boom*

The 13th Floor Elevators – *The Psychedelic Sounds of the 13th Floor Elevators*

The Troggs – *From Nowhere... The Troggs*

The Walker Brothers – *Portrait*

The West Coast Pop Art Experimental Band – *Volume One*

The Who – *A Quick One*

Produced by Waco, Texas' very own Tom Wilson – the producer of Sun Ra's debut *Jazz By Sun Ra* (now known as *Sun Song*); Dylan's *The Times They Are a-Changin'*, *Another Side of Bob Dylan*, and *Bringing It All Back Home*; Simon & Garfunkel's debut *Wednesday Morning, 3 A.M.*; Nico's *Chelsea Girl*; and The Velvet Underground's *White Light/White Heat* – and released on Verve, *Freak Out!* belongs to no one single genre. It bounces fluidly from blues to doo-wop to jazz to rock to psychedelic to avant-garde to prog rock.

Some shrug it off as an obscure concept album, but I hear *Freak Out!* as album on which Zappa is wearing many of his musical influences on his sleeves. And this brings me along to the infamous *Freak Out!* list – a wide-ranging and comprehensive list of important musical influences that Zappa included within the packaging of *Freak Out!* And this is what the documentary *Frank Zappa: The Freak-Out List* is all about. Quite heady and intellectual, *Frank Zappa: The Freak-Out List* combines archival footage of Zappa and his influences with interviews with The Mother of Invention's Ian Underwood, Don Preston and George Duke; Zappa biographers Ben Watson and Greg Russo; experimental music historian Professor David Nicholls; soul and R&B expert Robert Pruter.

I'm a fan for waxing philosophically about music history and theory, but I'm just not sure if Zappa really intended for the *Freak Out!* list to be the Rosetta Stone for his music – which is how the list is interpreted by *Frank Zappa: The Freak-Out List*. Personally, I always thought that Zappa was just trying to turn his fans on to the music that he liked. In other words, if you like *Freak Out!* you might also like...

Then, rather than being a more comprehensive review of the list, *Frank Zappa: The Freak-Out List* chooses to expand its focus beyond Zappa's debut record going into a fairly extensive discussion on Zappa's first jazz-rock hybrid album – *Hot Rats*. This is where the documentary loses me...especially when people start comparing *Hot Rats* with Miles Davis' masterful *In a Silent Way*. Again, I recognize Zappa's talent within *Hot Rats*, but I just don't see how it can be compared to an album like *In a Silent Way*.

Just the archival footage and high-brow discussions on some key (and unknown) figures in pre-1966 music history makes *Frank Zappa: The Freak-Out List* a worthwhile viewing...even for non-Zappa aficionados. But if you are an unabashed admirer of Zappa, then there should be nothing stopping you from checking this (unauthorized) documentary out.

Frank Zappa: The Freak-Out List is currently available on DVD via [MVD visual](#).

Rating: 6/10



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