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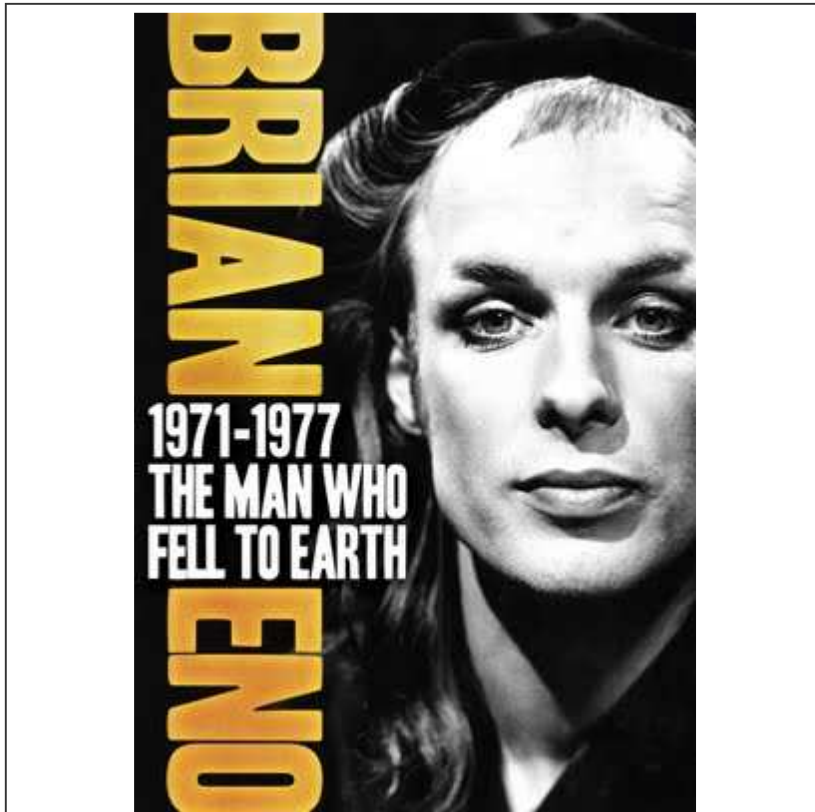
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CULTURE, CINEMA, STAGE, SOUNDS, LIFESTYLE

WEDNESDAY, MAY 18, 2011

DVD REVIEW: BRIAN ENO 1971-1977



The cover for *Brian Eno 1971-1977: The Man Who Fell to Earth*.

Brain One

By [Don Simpson](#)

Brian Eno 1971-1977: The Man Who Fell To Earth is, surprisingly enough, the first documentary film produced about, but not authorized or sanctioned by, Brian Peter George St. John le Baptiste de la Salle Eno, otherwise known as [Brian Eno](#), or simply just Eno. The documentary captures what are arguably the most important years of

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Eno's fruitful career in 154 minutes. This would be 60 minutes too long for most music documentaries, but considering Eno's countless seminal contributions to music as a musician, arranger, producer, innovator and theorist during those eight years, even 154 minutes seems all too brief of an overview. For better or worse, Eno is probably best known today for his production duties for [U2](#) and [Coldplay](#). The purpose of *Brian Eno 1971-1977: The Man Who Fell To Earth* is to school the uninitiated on Eno's golden years.

Eno studied at art school and considered himself to be a non-musician when he joined Roxy Music as their keyboards and synthesizers player in the early 1970s. As with everything else he touched from here on out, Eno's unique influence, otherwise known as "treatments" or "Enossification," on Roxy Music's first two albums -- *Roxy Music* (1972) and *For Your Pleasure* (1973) -- is undeniable.

After one too many clashes with Roxy Music frontman Brian Ferry, Eno began a solo career releasing four groundbreaking "vocal" albums (all of which would be "desert island" picks for me): *Here Come the Warm Jets* (1974), *Taking Tiger Mountain (By Strategy)* (1974), *Another Green World* (1975) and *Before and After Science* (1977). Eno also began releasing instrumental albums, which eventually became his forte as a solo artist, such as *Discreet Music* (1975) and *Ambient 1/Music for Airports* (1978), thus laying the groundwork for ambient music.

Eno simultaneously began involving himself in many collaborative projects such as *No Pussyfooting* (1973) and *Evening Star* (1975) with Robert Fripp (King Crimson); *The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway* (1974) with Genesis; *End* (1974) with Nico (Velvet Underground); *Lady June's Linguistic Leprosy* (1974) with Kevin Ayers (Soft Machine) and poet June Campbell Cramer; *Diamond Head* (1975) and *Listen Now* (1977) with Phil Manzanera (Roxy Music); *Fear* (1974), *Slow Dazzle* (1975) and *Helen of Troy* (1975) with John Cale (Velvet Underground); *Cluster & Eno* (1977) with Cluster; and *Low* (1977) and *"Heroes"* (1977) with David Bowie. Also by the close of 1977, Eno had produced

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Ultravox's *Ultravox!*, Talking Heads' *More Songs About Buildings and Food* and Devo's debut *Q: Are We Not Men? A: We Are Devo!*.

And that is -- literally -- only about half of what Eno did between 1971 and 1977. *Brian Eno 1971-1977: The Man Who Fell To Earth* touches upon even more Eno-related projects than I just did, dedicating a few minutes to each release and spending a bit more time on the major milestones in Eno's career. Archive footage of live performances and studio recording sessions is interspersed amongst interviews with music journalists, colleagues, collaborators and friends; and of course there is a healthy dose of Eno's music (most of which is matched with visual accompaniment).

Eno is debatably one of the most influential individuals to have ever worked in the music industry. As one of the more innovative musicians and producers in the history of rock music, no matter what role Eno plays during the recording of a song, he approaches the studio as a painter approaches a blank canvas. His specialty is adding more dimensions to the music, highlighting aspects of the song structure to make it stand out more, while morphing other aspects in order to blur them into the background. Everything Eno has touched during his 40+ year career has been gold to my ears.

Now available on DVD, *Brian Eno 1971-1977: The Man Who Fell To Earth* suitably represents Eno's genius, though I would argue that his golden years continued through the 1981 release of his collaboration with David Byrne, *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts*.

POSTED BY JESTHER AT 7:30 PM 

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