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The Doors – Mr. Mojo Risin': The Story Of L.A. Woman (Eagle Blu-ray)/**From Straight To Bizarre: Zappa, Beefheart, Alice Cooper & L.A.'s Lunatic Fringe** (Chrome Dreams/MVD DVD)/**Memphis** (2012/Musical/Shout! Factory Blu-ray)/**The Other F Word** (Oscilloscope DVD/all 2011 – 2012)

Picture: B-/C/B-/C+ Sound: B-/C+/B/C+ Extras: C+/C/C+/B Main Programs: B-/B+/B-/B



What does Rock music mean today? To some, it is a dead genre and only good for nostalgia, with others laughing at the mere mention of "Rock N Roll" for numerous reasons, yet Rap/Hip Hop peaked in 2000 and no new genre has merged in the 21st Century yet. In addition, Rock was so massively successful that the ground it broke may be familiar, yet some artists took it into directions that have yet to be really explored and our four Rock releases here today show us the great extent that is true.

Whatever you think of Jim Morrison, people still talk about him and he was one of the genre's earliest landmark stars. **The Doors – Mr. Mojo Risin': The Story Of L.A. Woman** examines the end of Morrison, his band and the key album they made that was a departure from their previous releases as well as the one that turned out to be their last. Like Led Zeppelin's **In Through The Out Door** (1979), you can hear the band sounding gruffer than ever throwing out most pop sensibilities and coming up with a darker work than before. It was the end of the bands in both cases and both were big commercial and critical successes.

This new making-of program runs about an hour but is not an installment of the Classic Albums series (which already featured debut album of **The Doors** (reviewed on DVD elsewhere on this site) as their seminal work and they only cover one artist's album for the whole series) nor is this an installment of the **Under Review** series (which does albums as well as documentaries on periods of artists) but has been undertaken by the remaining band members and is as good a documentary on their work as the many we have seen to date.

Ray Manzarek is less talky and more informative than usual, more of the

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 > Sid & Nancy (1986/MGM) /Stars & Stripes Forever (1952/Fox Blu-rays)
 > Cave of Forgotten Dreams 3D: Humanity’s Lost Masterpiece – A Film by Werner Herzog (Sundance Selects/IFC/MPI Blu-ray 3D + Blu-ray on one disc)

key people involved are interviewed than before and the result is one of the most organized, professional presentations of their work to date. It also shows (unlike the older programs from the VHS era) how well this music has endured and offers great detail on each song on the album including comments from the mixing board. It also suggests the band had more good albums in them if Morrison had survived and rightly so.

Extras include a new track “*She Smells So Nice*” with a photo montage and 35 minutes of footage not shown on TV or apparently anywhere else. You can read more about our coverage of Blu-ray and DVD releases on the band starting at this link:

<http://www.fulvuedrive-in.com/review/10039/Classic+Albums:+Black+Sabbath+%E>

One person who did manage to make many more albums and become as important as anyone in Rock music was Frank Zappa. One of those innovators most still have not caught up with, **From Straight To Bizarre: Zappa, Beefheart, Alice Cooper & L.A.’s Lunatic Fringe** picks up where Chrome Dreams program on his founding of The Mothers Of Invention left off with a little overlap as Zappa and business partner Herb Cohen formed record labels to increase creative control of their music and the work they were doing with signed acts against the grain of a record business that was more business than it should have been and before Rock further exploded as a big money genre.

Dealing with MGM/Verve (the same company Andy Warhol had worked with to launch **The Velvet Underground & Nico**); Zappa started the Bizarre label and found acts that would fit it, then (for reasons best left to this amazing 2½ Hour documentary) started the Straight imprint. All the albums were unique, most eventually critical successes (even if they were not at first) and only lasted a few years as new distributor Warner Bros. took over one of their acts and made them into a huge early 1970s Rock sensation: Alice Cooper!

I will not say much more as I do not want to ruin any more surprises, but this is another great surprise from the Chrome Dreams/MVD-released series and is especially a must-see for anyone serious about music, music industry or entertainment industry overall. Extras include text on the contributors, a brief featurette on how a cappella The Persuasions moved on to great success in the 1970s and a piece on the troubles of signed act The Magic Band.

For more on our extensive Zappa coverage, start with this link:


[http://www.fulvuedrive-in.com/review/10633/Pina+Bausch+in+Dancing+Dreams+\(F](http://www.fulvuedrive-in.com/review/10633/Pina+Bausch+in+Dancing+Dreams+(F)

Going way back, the new Broadway Musical **Memphis**, which won the Tony for Best Musical, has surprising surfaced on Blu-ray and is yet another musical like **Grease**, **Smokey Joe’s Café** and especially **Hairspray** that brings us back to the early years of Rock Music and the social change that it brought, including (save **Grease**) a reminder of what was gained and then (implied) rolled back starting in the 1980s and what could not be rolled back at all.

DJ Huey Calhoun (Chad Kimball) loves Rock Music, but at the time, it was also known as “Race Music” or “Colored Music” but that does not stop him from loving it, wanting it and is determined to make a name for himself on it. This takes a turn for the better when he starts popularizing it and really heats up when he meets a singer named Felicia Farrell (Montego Glover) who has a golden voice and falls in love with her. However, since she is African American in a racist Southern city and he is white, they



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have to be careful of what is a forbidden love in its time.

The music by Joe DiPietro (from his book) and David Bryan (the longtime keyboardist of the Pop and sometimes Rock band Bon Jovi with a work to rival any of their achievements as a band) with orchestrations by Bryan and Daryl Waters is good and sometimes powerful, but this gets off to a rough start and some of the songs are not that good. Eventually though, especially when Glover arrives, synergy kicks in and it becomes its own strong work. However, I found many parts predictable, though some of that is sadly because of hate and racism that needed to be honestly portrayed that the makers had to include no matter how ugly. Yet, some of the other moments were too similar to **Hairspray** (songs, dancing, timed moments) and it could even be argued that this is a variant of the John Waters’ inspired hit whitewashed of any gay context and that would hold a valid degree of validity, but to explain would require a separate essay and should not take away from what does work here.

It was nice to see African American singers and dancers in modern times performing (even Gospel music) without being from a Tyler Perry stage musical or one of his many imitators, so I liked that too. Chemistry from this original cast puts this version over the top, so if you like this kind of musical, you should get this Blu-ray ASAP. Extras include a featurette: ***Behind The Scenes: How Memphis Was Captured.***

Last but not least is another surprise, Andrea Blaugrund Nevins’ **The Other F Word** (2011), a documentary about a new side of Punk Rock... the male lead singers becoming parents and how most of them are simply not prepared. The lifestyle is about staying young and subversive, being rowdy and destructive and not being part of society. However, having children changes everything and we see the changes that happen and how they affect all involved.

Most of the singers are not prepared at all, including most who have had bad parent experiences, others who have had awful sexual abuse and others who have major emotional and psychological troubles that only now they are finally dealing with middle age! Making things worse is that most of them start having children as the record business collapses. Suddenly, their records are not selling and when they are smaller-yet-popular bands, that means hundreds of days a year touring Away from home and therefore they are not able to bed there not unlike their parents in many cases.

The result is a study of the artists, the industry in flux, the Punk genre and how part of their held-over revolution is over. Flea from Red Hot Chili Peppers offers some great insight as usual, the underrated Art Alexakis of Everclear is especially honest and heartbreaking in telling his side of things, Mark Mothersbaugh of DEVO is on the cutting edge of what is going on as always, Mark Hoppus of Blink 182 is as natural a comic as ever (very talented guy), Tim McIlrath of Rise Again and we especially follow the odyssey of Jim Lindberg of Pennywise on how being an aging Rocker is a challenge, though even more people were kind enough to be interviewed.

This can be very brutal and painful to watch, but it can also show how great the people in Punk Music have always been, even if they do not think of themselves as such and how the anti-social effect lingers for better and for worse. We see many music documentaries year and year out, but they balance music with the music makers. This is more personal as these artists and people really open up in bold and brave ways to show and tell their situations and how it affects them all. When all is said and done, this will go down as one of the most important documents on Punk Music ever made, but also how good people are left a bit behind by changes when they have not figured out a business model or had advanced support or advanced thinking on the future, a story that goes

beyond any genre of music. Cheers to Oscilloscope for picking up this gem!

Extras include Outtakes, Acoustic music performances by Alexakis and McIlrath (separately), post-screening Q&A at the SXSW Film Festival premiere, two Music Videos, the Original Theatrical Trailer and feature length audio commentary by Lindberg, Alexakis, Director Nevins and Producer Cristan Reilly.

The 1080i 1.78 X 1 digital High Definition image on the Blu-rays are the best here as expected, but **Doors** has new HD footage and good film footage mixed in with analog NTSC and even PAL video, some film badly transferred to analog video and other issues typical of documentary productions that hold it back, yet are par for the course on the image mix you get from such documentary programs. **Memphis** is all HD, but sometimes Video Black is weak and it has other minor detail issues you get from such an HD shoot. Otherwise, color range is often really nice and editing helps.

The 1.33 X 1 on the **Zappa** DVD has the same variant image issues as **Doors**, but this was softer than I am used to seeing from the Chrome Dreams series overall and that disappoints a bit. Good thing the program is so strong. The anamorphically enhanced 1.78 X 1 image on **Word** is also a mix of such footage, but most of the footage is newer digital video and what looks like HD of some kind.

Both Blu-rays have DTS-HD MA (Master Audio) 5.1 lossless mixes, but **Memphis** is the champ here with a nice soundstage throughout and only a few moments where dialogue could have been clearer. Too bad there are no subtitles, which is odd for a musical. **Doors** is a mix of new simple stereo interviews, old monophonic interviews, variant audio in between and nice applications of the 5.1 remixes of their hits that debuted years ago on the nearly defunct DVD-Audio format we have covered before. You can really appreciate the music made when you can hear it this well and the audio is as good as any Doors video release to date.

The lossy Dolby Digital 5.1 on **Word** is a bit better than the lossy Dolby Digital 2.0 Stereo, but save some of the music, this is a mostly simple stereo soundtrack. The lossy Dolby Digital 2.0 Stereo is obviously not the best audio a **Zappa** title has ever had, but it is still professionally done and the first time many people will hear some of the key music by other artists **Zappa** backed that is not in print.

Looking and sounding better than all of them is the Blu-ray for **Hairspray**, a big budget film version of that hit stage musical and one you can now compare to **Memphis** at home shot by shot. Read more about it at this link:

<http://www.fulvuedrive-in.com/review/6271/Hairspray+%E2%80%93+Shake+&+Sh>

- Nicholas Sheffo

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