

# The Impaler Speaks

## From Straight To Bizarre: Zappa, Beefheart, Alice Cooper, and L.A.'s Lunatic Fringe

[@mvdentgroup](#) A DVD that deserves to be seen by everyone with an interest in music, independent labels, and/or any form of counterculture entertainment. [Frank Zappa](#), [Alice Cooper](#), [Captain Beefheart](#), [Pamela Des Barres](#), and more are featured in this documentary, which is both entertaining and informative. Review written for [Mass Movement](#) 33, a work in progress.



From Straight To Bizarre: Zappa, Beefheart, Alice Cooper, and L.A.'s Lunatic Fringe (director: Tom O'Dell; Sexy Intellectual/MVD Visual)

After dealing with major label headaches for a few years, Frank Zappa went on a mission to go indie in 1969. He teamed up with Herb Cohen, who had found a way to navigate through the sharks of the record business over the years, and formed two independent labels: Straight Records and Bizarre Records. This film has the feel of a BBC documentary – which is to say that it is well-researched and engaging across the board while consisting primarily of interviews and screen-shots of photos from the era, tied together with an exceptionally proper voiceover narrative and a few choice musical and video clips of the subject acts, including Alice Cooper, Captain Beefheart & The Magic Band, The GTO's (featuring Pamela Des Barres), Tim Buckley, The Persuasions, Lord Buckley, Lenny Bruce, and Zappa himself. The interviews are well done – none feature the poor lighting, bad audio, or flippant disrespect for the task at hand that are all too common in the average indie documentary – and informative. How long has the drummer for The Magic Band or the bassist from the original Alice Cooper band been dealing with pent-up issues



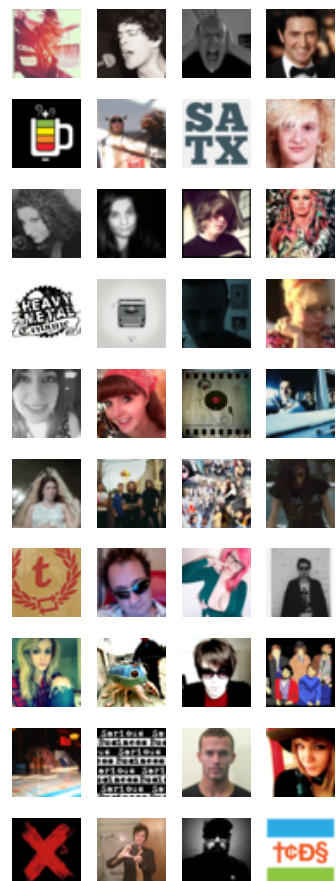
The Impaler Speaks... supporting local music worldwide, from Austin TX to the United Kingdom and everywhere else. The Impaler has been a member of the Mass Movement creative team since it was a cut-n-paste fanzine many years ago. This is a way to add some depth to the coverage I am able to provide in MM, and so much more...

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If you have a serious question or comment, this is the place for it.

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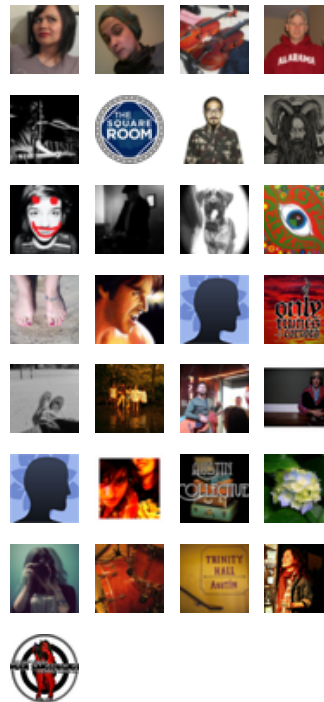
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over the direction of their careers after both bands' respective frontmen reworked them into solo acts? It's cathartic just to watch and listen to these people tell their stories from that era, both negative and positive (mostly positive, I'd say). Interviewees include John French and Dennis Dunaway (the aforementioned drummer and bassist, respectively), Pamela Des Barres (who has always had a way with such matters), Kim Fowley (who always kinda makes things worthwhile just by appearing and by being Kim Fowley), and others who were there or who have spent a large part of the past 40-some years researching and writing about Zappa and his universe. While many of the acts covered are less than household names today, the film itself provides a fascinating glimpse into the organization of the original L.A. 'freak scene' and deserves to be seen by everyone with an interest in music, independent labels, and/or any form of counterculture entertainment. **The Impaler** [@impalerspeaks](#)

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