

TV Party: Premier Episode, December 18, 1978 / 2006 MVD / 91 Minutes / <http://www.mvdb2b.com> / Reviewed 04 June 2006

This DVD should really be packaged with the TV Party documentary. I mean, it makes sense since both are dealing with the same topic. The first-hand footage on the documentary would be bolstered by the full episode contained here, while the documentary would give this premier episode a context that it does not have just separate. I'm not saying that both features should be contained in the same DVD, but a boxed set would be a good starting point for individuals that may not be that familiar with the show. This is the full video from the original episode, and the footage is very sharp for something that is over twenty-five years old. Perhaps most enjoyable out of all the footage from the episode is the musical number, called "Skylab".

Aside from being a good song, the song brings the show to a new heights with an admittedly-primitive but nonetheless fun switch between the vantage points of the two cameras in studio, set to the tempo of the track. The use of non-traditional instruments (typewriter) during this track also gives the song as well as the show a very experimental feel, one that goes against the grain of what is normal and every-day in life.

The blend of interviews and musical guests during the show is a further slap in the face to all of the stuffy late-night talk shows. Where it is usually the case that interviews take up more than the lion's share of a show, it feels almost as if the musical component of TV Party is equal to the interview component. Couple that with a high amount of artistic feel to the show (for example, the infinite regress involving a microphone between the television camera and a monitor. Some of the discussions that happen during this show are just bonkers; the discussion about time traveling I'm not sure I still get, even with watching the scene a few times. The other-worldliness of the show is something that is sorely needed again on television; it seems that when someone does come up with an interesting new idea (CKY, for example), the tendency is to glom onto that success instead of craft something new or something that expands on precedent.

TV Party created something new in 1978, and it would do individuals good to watch this show and see exactly how they can expand upon the precedent, instead of just emulating something that was created with a specific frame of mind and context. Here's to hoping that there is some service put into place that allows individuals to see other episodes from TV Party, and see how they expanded on their own precedent and kept things fresh. There is footage of later episodes on the documentary, but there really needs to be full episodes to see how individuals took up a larger length of space (instead of collecting the strongest footage from the shows). A wonderful piece of American television, the episode does not feel dated even when we are almost thirty years removed from the original broadcast.

Rating: 6.9/10

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