

MUSIC

On a screen near you, Berry and Beefheart at a TV party

"Chuck Berry Hail! Hail! Rock 'n' Roll — The Ultimate Collectors' Edition" (Image Entertainment)

The original impetus for producers Taylor Hackford and Stephanie Bennett to make the 1986 biopic "Chuck Berry Hail! Hail! Rock 'n' Roll" was to celebrate the life and music of rock's founding father upon the occasion of his 60th birthday.



LINDSAY PLANER

As the disc spins

After a generally well-received theatrical run, the project resurfaced only to be released on home video back in the late '80s.

Fast-forward 20 years for the new four-DVD Ultimate Collectors' Edition. For starters, the movie has been flawlessly refurbished and outfitted with a new anamorphic widescreen video transfer. Among the highlights are nearly an hour of rehearsals with Berry, supported by folks like Keith Richards, Eric Clapton, Robert Cray and Steve Jordan. One of the most



revealing sidebars is the hour-long "Reluctant Movie Star," dealing with the complexities of Chuck Berry the man and the artist. Another is the intimate "Burnt Scrapbook" section with Berry and Robbie Robertson going through some of Berry's memorabilia that was irreparably damaged and barely rescued from a fire in the '70s.

"Glenn O'Brien's TV PARTY" (Brink DVD)

OK, there is an admitted soft spot in my heart for Glenn O'Brien's no budget and ultra lo-fi cable access show "TV Party." As it was only shown live in New York City, folks like me tuned-in and inevitably got turned-on via the barely-viewable VHS tapes. This initial batch of three DVDs respectively feature the complete

"Time & Make-up Show" (1979), "Halloween Show" (1979) and "Crusades Show" (1981). The program itself is a synthesis of "Larry King Live," "Jerry Springer Show" and "Saturday Night Live." The constant flow of action on and off camera provide an unbridled surrealism, leaving the distinct impression that no matter how many times you watch and re-watch, you'll never catch it all.

Some of the most vivid images are of celebs — such as the semi-retired musician Robert Fripp or visual artist Jean-Michel Basquiat — taking calls from viewers. Equally memorable are the duo of Fifi & Claude who unleash a unique brand of accordion and guitar punk rock. An extra worth the price of admission in and of itself is the decidedly laid-back

conversation with North Carolina native George Clinton of P-Funk fame.

Captain Beefheart — "Under Review" (Sexy Intellectual) The Velvet Underground — "Under Review" (Sexy Intellectual)

Although unauthorized by the artists themselves, the "Under Review" DVD series brings to light the stories behind a diverse range of musicians. Two of the most recent installments provide what are essentially the first respective multi-media biographies of Captain Beefheart and The Velvet Underground.

Captain Beefheart — the nom de plume of Don Van Vliet — is practically the only member of the extensive Magic Band personnel that doesn't contribute to this nearly two-hour career overview. Yet, thanks to invaluable insight and commentary by John French, Mark Boston, Jeff Moris Tepper, Elliot Ingber, Ira Ingber, Jerry Handley, Doug Moon, Gary Marker, Eric Drew Feldman and Gary Lucas, viewers are guided through the criminally misunderstood ge-

nus of Captain Beefheart.

The Magic Band blended unrefined blues and blue-eyed soul with complex and often Dada-esque lyrics. The atonal chord changes and highly advanced arrangements allowed Beefheart and company to push the boundaries of rock into a malleable form of sonic art that truly defies categorization. There are a host of never-before compiled video clips that are excerpted, but sadly not presented in their entirety. That, and of course the absence of the man himself, are the only drawbacks in this fascinating rockumentary. Even while the Velvet Underground were critics' darlings, producing the likes of Lou Reed, John Cale and Nico, they never garnered more than a devout cult following Stateside. However, there would have been no punk, underground or alternative scenes without them.

Lindsay Planer is a local freelance music journalist and regular contributor to All Music Guide (allmusic.com), All Movie Guide (allmovie.com), Crutchfield Advisor (crutchfieldadvisor.com) and Music Tap (musictap.net). He can be reached via e-mail at thediscspins@earthlink.net.