

## VERSIONS

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## REVIEWS

**Queen - Under Review 1973 - 1980/Magic Moments boxset**

The Under Review series concentrates on talk, not music - and although this often results in some fascinating insights from peripheral players, journalists and pundits, it's a poor substitute for the product itself.



Never more so than on this reissue of 2005's 103-minute documentary, presumably remarketed to accompany the new release covering the remainder of the band's career from 1980 to 1991.

Although it includes some "rare footage never before available on DVD", it suffers from verbal diarrhoea and would have benefited from a much tighter edit. Although some participants produce insightful soundbytes - Uncut's Nigel Williamson describes Queen as having "a profound sense of their own absurdity" - many more are allowed to witter and stumble on for what seems like hours, saying little of any originality or merit.

Guitarists will be happy at the participation of the muso press's Simon Bradley, who provides oodles of techie intelligence on chords, harmonies and how Brian May set up his signature instruments; non-musicians will doubtless find these extended segments snoozeworthy.

Chromie Dreams have also reissued another documentary from the previous year, 2004's Magic Moments. It takes a slightly less strictly chronological approach to the band's career and concentrates more strongly on analysing its particular cultural appeal.

In this it employs not only producers and journalists, but celebrity fans from other areas of the arts - like retired Royal Ballet star Wayne Sleep or Freddie Mercury's friend, actor Peter Straker.

However, footage of the band is very thin on the ground and copyright prevents any use of the music. This might be bearable if the interviews were conducted in silence, but when discussion of the band's songs is played over a badly edited loop of what sounds like a Queen covers band playing in a scout hut, the overall effect is infuriating.

By: Clare O'Brien



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