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Where Is The Chesterfield King? □

Picture: C Sound: C Extras: C Film: B

Living In The Echo Chamber, or How I Learned To Stop Kvetching and Love 1960s Rock'N'Roll Movie Pastiche. Yeah, that's what I'll call this review of The Chesterfield Kings 'movie'. Or maybe I'll just title it *Rock 'em, Sock 'em*, because, you see, there's an evil alien who wants to use good ol' wholesome as mother's milk Rock'N'Roll to smash humanity and take over the world. It's a fiendish plan which involves dressing in glam outfits and slapping slow-witted henchmen upside the head ala The Three Stooges all the while holding prisoner a sweet innocent longhaired drummer. Will the Kings save their drummer and stop Andro from subjugating the world, or will the lads bicker and peruse Uncle Scrooge comics while the alien miscreant has his way?

And that, in its entirety, is the plot of this wiggled out feature length production. It's perfect in its haiku simplicity. And just as haiku rely upon an established language of nature motifs for symbolism and cultural reference, **Where Is The Chesterfield King?** (Music Video Distributors) is almost wholly reliant upon a visual language learned expressly from Dick Lester's Beatles movies and The Monkees television show. That shouldn't surprise anyone familiar with the Kings brand of jangly '60s influenced pop music.

What saves the project from being completely laughable is the total absence of a smirking wink thrown our way by smugly self-aware filmmakers. There's not a hint of irony anywhere to be found in this production and I applaud the corny sincerity.

Well done, lads!

The Chesterfield Kings shot out of upstate New York in the early 1980s and landed in the newly birthed New Wave scene with a raw, old school rockin' sound just as out of place then as when the Flamin' Groovies attempted the same fably anachronistic, but poorly received, move in the previous decade. Both bands in fact appear appropriately enough on Rhino's newly released **Children of Nuggets** boxed set.

The movie was made over a period of years. Often incorporating material the band shot themselves while touring Europe, the narrative itself, while intentionally slim I admit, holds together very well. It's entertaining from start to finish. Sure the acting is bad and the budget nil, while the 1.33 X 1 image and simple Dolby Digital sound are rough, but so what. There's a lot of love in this film, a sweet valentine heart stuck on every frame.

And considering the marginal position the Kings brand of music occupies in our current culture we could almost call this avant-garde. But that would wreck the fun of it.

- Kristofer Collins

MARKET PLACE

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