

The Moistboyz

Live Jihad

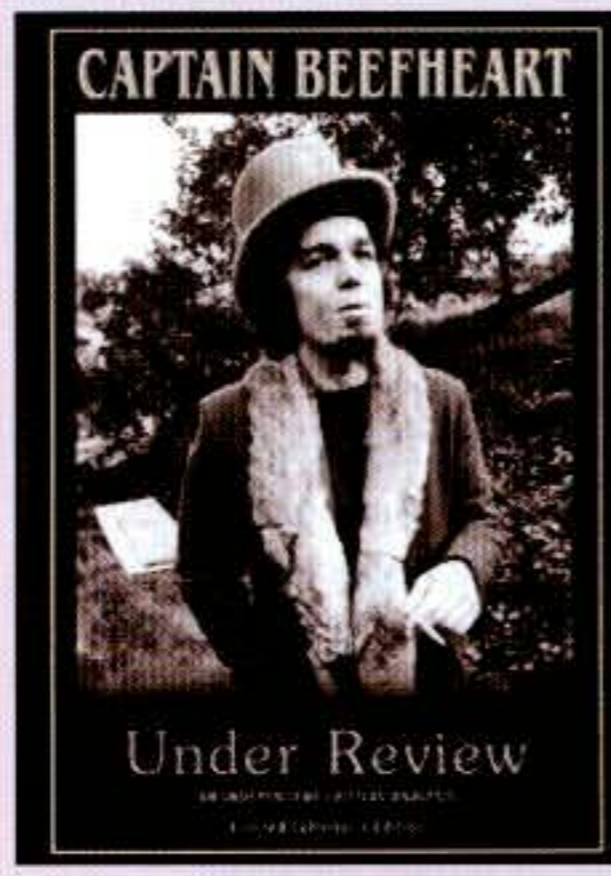
MVD



The even louder, cruder, and more over-the-top counterpart to Ween's genre-twisting eclecticism, the Moistboyz make another stab at low-brow legitimacy with their first DVD release. Capturing one 2005 show at New York City's Bowery Ballroom, the set presents Mickey Moist (a.k.a. Dean Ween) and Dickie Moist in all their sweat and beer fueled glory. Like Ween, whether or not you enjoy the Moistboyz largely depends on whether you're in on the joke, as the band prides itself in smashing taboos and reaffirming stereotypes with their tongue-in-cheek frat boy humor. Titles like "Fuck You," "U Blow," and "The Year of the Maggot" are pretty representative of the sentiments presented therein, and the band's intentionally clumsy exploration of American foreign policy and police violence mingles with chest-pumping paeans to cocaine and criticism of white trash culture.

Unfortunately, if you're not a fan of beligerent putdowns and political screeds wrapped in furious hardcore punk and thick metal riffing, the set will be an unbearably belabored 75 minutes. Further, despite the preening and staggering Jim Morrison stances of frontman Dickie Moist — shirtless and covered in beer as he howls, barks, and rolls around on the stage — the band is not terribly engaging on a visual level. Further, despite employing a variety of camera angles, the footage fails to capture the energy of the crowd. To their credit, the band has perfected their chops and their perfectly sloppy rock star poses, but *Live Jihad* is obviously a song aimed at their choir.

- Matt Fink



Captain Beefheart

Under Review

Sexy Intellectual

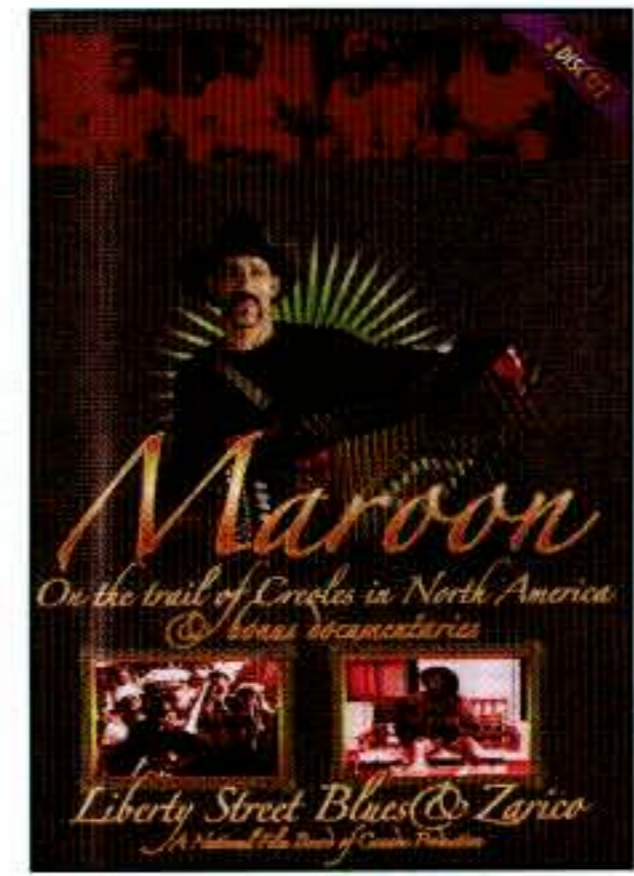
www.captainbeefheart.com



Though he's regularly and rightly remembered as one of rock's true visionary eccentrics, Don Van Vliet (a.k.a. Captain Beefheart) remains a man whose story has largely remained untold. To that extent, the excellent *Under Review* series has a ripe text for exploration in Van Vliet's rise from a six-year-old sculpting prodigy to experimental music icon, taking time to explore each album in his catalog and the constant instability and defections of those in his Magic Band. Told through the memories of a half dozen Magic Band members, a few journalists, and one friend, the film uses vintage live footage to capture Van Vliet as a musically naïve but endlessly imaginative auteur who was as brilliant as he was inconsistent.

Appropriately, 1969's definitive *Trout Mask Replica* is given the most time, portraying its uncompromisingly idiosyncratic devolution of atonal blues, beat poetry, and polyrhythmic thumping as the product of Van Vliet's singular fixation on creating something that had never been done before. Along the way, the entire Magic Band will quit on him, he'll watch as his music is appropriated by a generation of new wave and punk bands, and he'll make awkward ventures into the era of MTV. Just why Van Vliet quit music for good in 1983 (and subsequently became a well-respected abstract painter) remains unclear, and the film's greatest shortcoming is the relative lack of insight into Van Vliet the person, leaving the mystery of the man intact but resulting in an overly academic film.

- Matt Fink



Maroon

On The Trails of Creole in North America



Though exploring the exceptional mix of cultures that makes up the fabric of life in New Orleans takes on a decidedly different tone in a post-Katrina era, *Maroon: On the Trail of Creoles in North America* is the type of film that resonates in any context. Focusing on the influence of the French-speaking slaves that escaped from plantation life to form a new culture while hiding out in the surrounding swamps and forests, Andre Gladu makes a fine case for that same rebel spirit eventually informing the creation of the blues, gospel, and jazz that became New Orleans' definitive feature.

Unfortunately, there are few individuals who still maintain the Creole culture and language, with the music and language largely left to a generation that is slowly dying out. Many of those individuals form the narrative arc of Gladu's story, as he interviews a colorful cast of musicians, historians, and cultural proprietors to bring to life their traditions in their rural home environs. In the process, he'll visit a variety of churches, zydeco halls, and a very different Mardi Gras celebration, maintaining a tight focus on the small Creole community.

Academic in tone and comprehensive in scope, the film is a combination of history, personal narrative, and ethnomusicology that will appeal to aficionados of the form but will probably be a bit too exhaustive for neophytes. Even so, anyone who wonders just what was at stake when New Orleans was underwater needs to look no further.

- Matt Fink