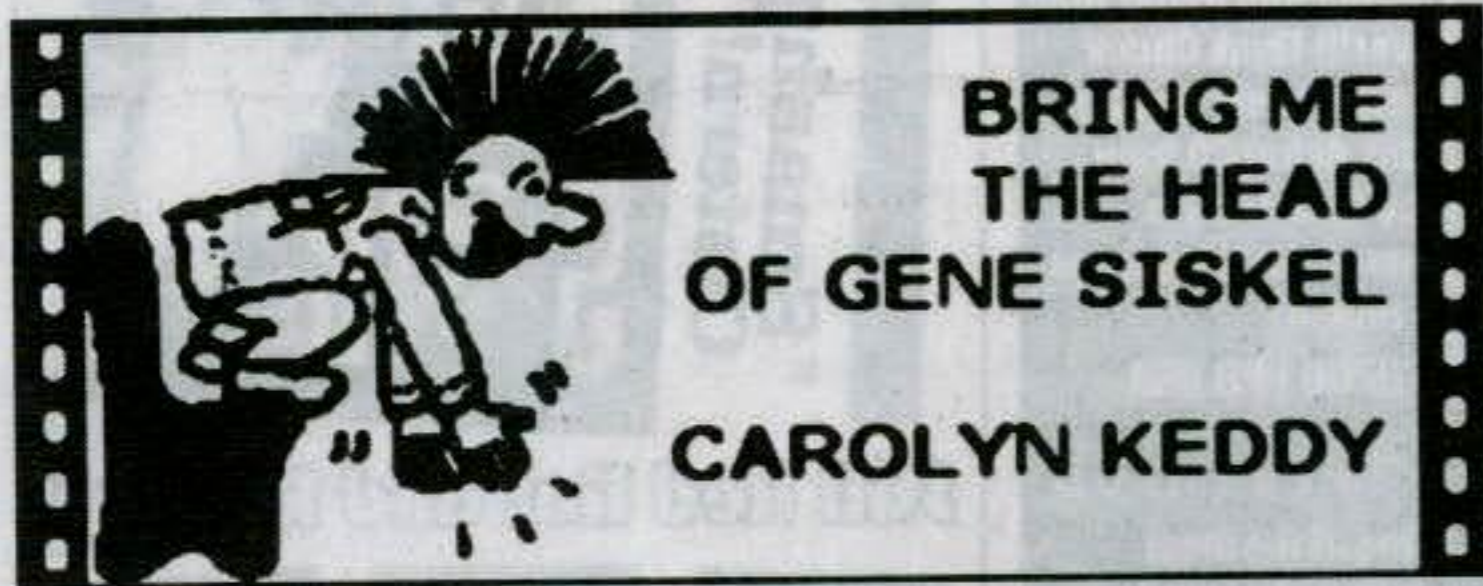


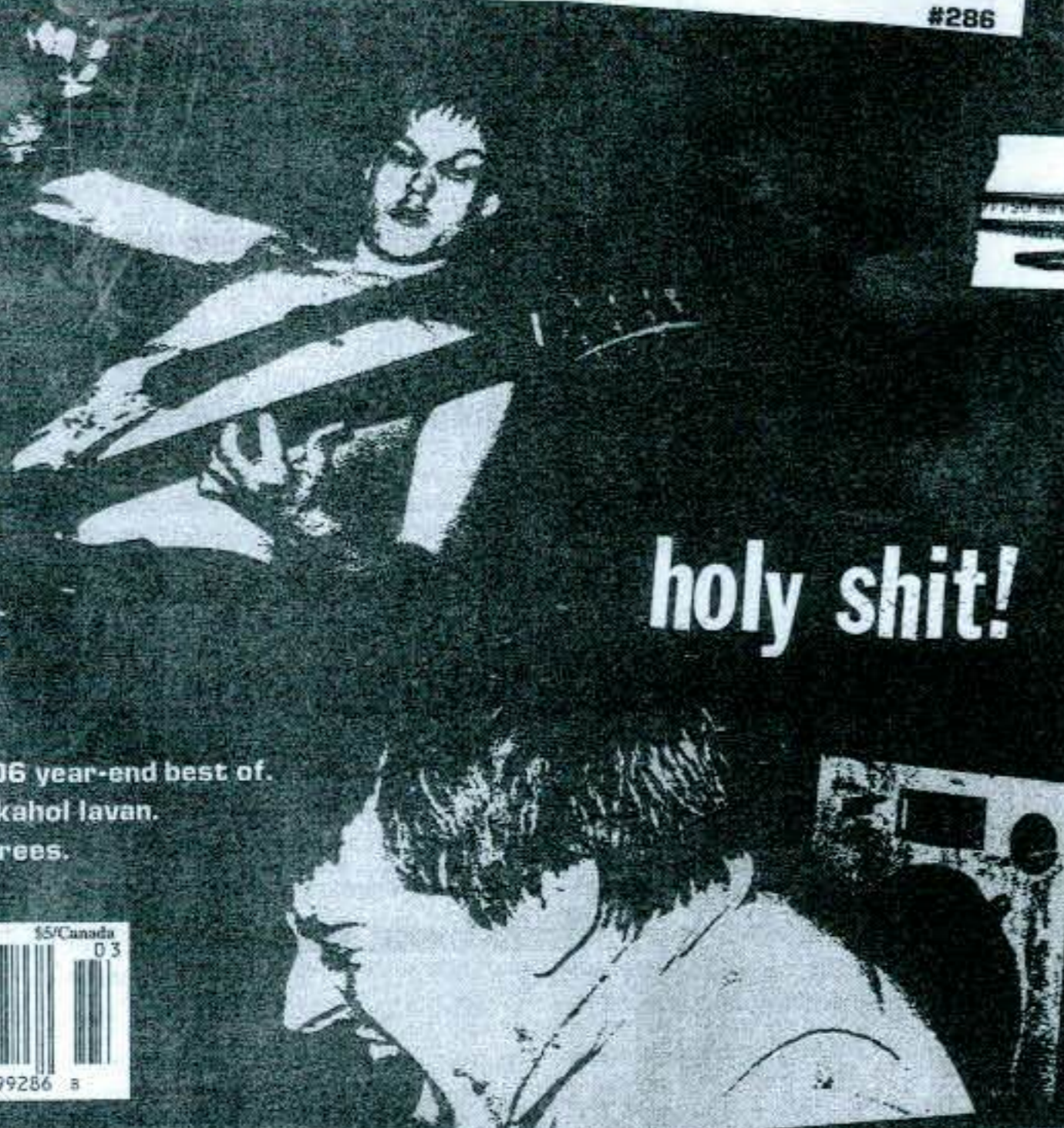
disconcerting disconnect between the words and the characters' mouths. In epic scenes, you don't notice; but most of the time, it seems that the spirit of fantasy relates mostly to the characters' talents at ventriloquism. As with **The Emperor and the Assassin**, the director employs spectacle to great success. The previous film was more realistic and tightly structured, but his latest has its own thrilling moments. True, some of the effects weren't quite up to par...but, uh, what do you expect for a mere \$34 million?



...And The Rest Is History

As the President of the Punk Rock Film Critics Association...

maximum **rocknroll** march 2007 #286



plus: 2006 year-end best of smartut kahol lavan. lost cherrees.



really fun interview with them. The DVD includes music videos, live footage and the complete interview.

Bad Brains: Live at CBGB 1982:

While not exactly a film per se, I'd rather watch Bad Brains at their peak live than have to listen to other musicians or even current day H.R. tell me about how great they were back then. Actions speak louder than words. Yes, I was fortunate enough to see them back then (not at CBGB) so I know how great they were. This is just a pleasant reminder for the old punks and a history lesson for those who missed it. The crowd watching is great too. This is how '80s punks really

looked, kids. Even when Bad Brains play one their reggae songs you can't help but being entertained by the crowd reaction.

Under Review DVD series:

I include the **Under Review** DVDs not because they are great filmmaking. They are far from it. They are simply the most fun you will have watching a music documentary. But don't watch them alone. Get a group of friends together with a bunch of snacks and cocktails and just let loose. Whenever a critic says something stupid, and they will, yell at the screen. Laugh out loud, you won't be able to help it. Then you can stop and catch your breath when the doc shows some footage of the band performing or the rare interview with a periphery member of the band. The Velvet Underground DVD somehow managed to get an interview with drummer Mo Tucker. The better ones in the series are the Velvet Underground, Captain Beefheart, and Syd Barrett. Joy Division was the biggest disappointment. They haven't found the right annoying critics for the punk ones yet.

Now on to new business.

When I was in junior high school, there was a movie theater The Strand in my hometown of Quincy, MA that showed music and horror films. The bills were directed at the local kids who went to the theater religiously every Friday and Saturday night. The place was always packed. In 1981 the theater booked The Plasmatics to play there. Bands never played in Quincy since it is a city right next to Boston. Everyone would just play Boston. Since I was too young, I hadn't yet figured out a way to go to shows in Boston. So I was going to the Plasmatics show. My mother told me I wasn't, but it was only a ten-minute walk from my house. I was going. Unfortunately, the show never happened since the Quincy City Council revoked the theater's entertainment license for the weekend.

What seems like a weird little side note in my personal musical history is amazingly covered in **Wendy O. Williams and The Plasmatics: Ten Years of Revolutionary Rock And Roll**, a new documentary about the legendary band. The film covers in minute detail every aspect of the ten-year existence of the band. Rod Swenson and Wendy O. Williams formed the Plasmatics as an art statement. Swenson wrote the lyrics and designed the album art. Williams performed the music and the stunts. Strangely, Swenson does not appear in the film. I suspect that producer/director Randy Shooter is actually a pseudonym for Swenson since he used multiple names on credits for many of the Plasmatics albums. The film covers their humble punk beginnings, the rising popularity, the run-ins with the law, the band line-ups changes, and their transformation into a metal band. It is an engrossing story.

There is lots of footage of the band blowing stuff up and chainsawing guitars. Even though every interviewee talks about how influential the band's music was, it takes twenty minutes to actually hear a song in the film, other than the music playing in the background. The song "Butcher Baby" isn't included in the documentary, but as a cool feature. A box appears on the screen, you click enter on the remote and watch the entire music video. Then you can go back to the documentary where you left off. This happens regularly throughout the doc. It is something all band documentaries should incorporate. The DVD also allows you to watch just the videos.

There are two technical things about **Wendy O. Williams and The Plasmatics: Ten Years of Revolutionary Rock And Roll** that make the film hard to watch. The first is the voice-over narration. The female narrator's voice is edited in an unnatural way. It sounds like she is talking extremely fast without ever taking a breath. No one talks like that. Remember when Laraine Newman would imitate a newscaster on SNL? It's like that. The information the narrator is sharing about the band comes at you at such speed that it is hard to take it all in.

The other technical problem is one you find a lot in modern documentaries. The editing of the interview subjects result in a series of annoying jump cuts. It is particularly excessive in **Wendy O. Williams and The Plasmatics: Ten Years of Revolutionary Rock And Roll**. Some of the people's sentences are so cut up the person pops back and forth for single words. Even an interview with Wendy O. Williams is cut this way. It is utterly annoying.

Overall, **Wendy O. Williams and The Plasmatics: Ten Years of Revolutionary Rock And Roll** is a very thorough documentary. Every thing you might need to know about the band is covered. Even that little incident in Quincy that probably few remember or even care about. (www.mvdvisual.com)

I am always looking for films to review. If you made one, send a copy to Carolyn Keddy, PO Box 460402, San Francisco, CA 94146-0402. If your film is playing in the San Francisco Bay Area, let me know at carolyn@maximumrocknroll.com. I will go see it.