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THIS REVIEW IS
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"Cut Shorts" AKA "Cut Shorts": A Collection of Short Films and Music Videos by David Markey from 1974-2004 (1974-2004)

R0 America

Eclectic DVD/ MVD (Music Video Distributors)



The Film:

What looks like a smart parody on the film "Short Cuts" (Robert Altman, 1993), in that it traces the lives of multiple people, this DVD - "Cut Shorts" - presents 20 of David Markey's Short Films and Music Videos from a wide 30-year period of his life, beginning in 1974. Like a CD, each video is encoded as a Chapter under one single Title, and will play until it reaches the end from whichever point you start it at.

The videos are as follows:

- "The Devil's Exorcist" (10:21)
- "This is the Space Age" (2:15)
- "Summer Has Been Over for a Long Time" (3:31)
- "America is Waiting" (1:36)
- "Plasticland" (5:14)
- "Astro Turf" (1:47)
- "Popcorn" (2:39)
- "Stoner Park" (5:06)
- "Puppeteers" (3:52)
- "Lou Believers" (6:58)
- "Tina the Party Pooper" (2:46)
- "Adolf 1990" (3:32)
- "Popcorn II" (2:55)
- "Burning Palms on Jennifer's Coffee Table" (4:10)
- "Rap Delight" (11:32)
- "Grunge Pedal" (4:55)
- "The Posies - 'Ritchie Dagger's Crime'" (3:25)
- "Eyes Adrift - 'Alaska'" (2:49)
- "Sonic Youth - 'I Love You Golden Blue'" (7:07)
- "The Boost II" (1:47)

Ranging quite a bit in length, and covering a range of different topics, writing individual reviews would be hard to do, especially as some are too unique to sum up in such a short space.

Having not heard of Markey before, coming to his early videos was a completely fresh introduction and a rather surprisingly good one. Short Films are always a difficult thing to gauge, especially when made when the director is young, but here there is evident talent and smart concepts of filming right from the word go. Although the DVD consists of rather bizarre and somewhat unfathomably weird videos, there are a few notable ones to point out; the "Popcorn" ones have some rather explicit forms of bodily functions ("Popcorn II" might actually be a real shot too!), "The Devil's Exorcist" (amongst a few others) has a fairly well done atmosphere, helped in no small part by the music, "Rap Damage" mainly consists of the word "f***" in some form or another spoken in pretty much every other sentence or even every other word and ones like "Adolf 1990" may offend some people (though it's not as if the previous ones wouldn't offend anyone either!).

With these videos Markey has had a chance to experiment with a wide variety of styles and effects, but without appearing excessive in doing so - a rather more natural progression than simply using effects because you can, and then repeating them ad nauseam. His visual style is hard to pin down completely, but as the DVD cover says a recurring theme is masks - used to a good effect throughout most of the videos, especially in those where it is less evident. Also, to an extent, facial expressions are key features of his work, with some recognisable and memorable expressions present in some of the clips. Whatever your views on the content of the video selection, there is no denying that the style has been played around with and presents a rather unique vision on behalf of its perpetrator. The colours used in the shots goes to emphasise this further, and certainly adds to Markey's work. Overall a rather impressive series of films, if only for the creative thought behind - though a fair few (if not all) also are very good in their individual content too.

The DVD:

Video:

The video varies widely across the release. "The Devil's Exorcist" looks like it has been framed at 1.66:1 and "Astroturf" looks more like a 1.78:1 framing (both non-anamorphic). Either way the entire collection of films is presented in a ratio of 4:3 non-anamorphic (because they are all one title of the DVD disc). The quality is dependant on the type of films used, but I did not notice any major issues with the transfer, though the later videos appear slightly clearer and more detailed (as could be expected) and on some of the films this is probably the best they would look without redoing each frame (and why would you want to?).

Audio:

The audio on each film is fairly clear and probably also the best it is going to get - nothing distracted me from the films audio in any of the present clips, which was good. From what I could tell the audio is Dolby Digital 2.0 Stereo, but this may not be the case for all the films (it is for some though, or so it seems).

Extras:

No extras are included, unless you count **Credits**.

An informative double-sided insert (with background information) accompanies this release, and is well worth a read.

OVERALL:

If you are a fan of David Markey or interested in a rather unique and varied selection of work and stylised filming, this could be a good purchase. If the

above doesn't sound overly appealing to you but you are still interested, perhaps only a rental or a purchase at a bargain bin price is in order. I certainly think there are a fair few things that can be learnt from this sort of independent style of work, and that may play a part in some people's interest to; it certainly did to me.

Film – B+ (on average)
Picture – C (on average)
Sound – C (on average)
Extras – n/a
Overall – B-/C+

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