



# EVERY PIXEL TELLS A STORY

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## Various Artists - Under Review

[Sexy Intellectual]

*Under Review* is an ongoing series of DVD releases, each dedicated to a specific musical artist (or in occasional cases, a certain album or period in an artist's career), providing a compact history of the group in question peppered with numerous critics, biographers, producers and others offering their own second-hand assessment of the work in question. All of this is interspersed with vintage clips (though, frustratingly, no full performances) - some more enticing than others - of the musicians, and if we're lucky, a few snippets of old conversations with the artists themselves. So yeah, in some respects it's sorta like

*Behind the Music*

minus any authorization or official input (most of the artists covered by this series are dead anyway), basically boiling down to critics discussing critics' faves - Syd Barrett, Small Faces, Joy Division, Bowie, Nirvana, etc - and it can get a bit dull if you're not already a huge fan of the subject matter, although even music snobs may learn something they didn't already know. The most successful and interesting entries tend to be the rare cases where band members or close confidants offer exclusive interviews - the Velvet Underground *Under Review* benefits greatly from commentary by drummer Maureen Tucker, Factory artist Billy Name and seldom-interviewed later member Doug Yule, while the Beefheart doc includes chatter from a gaggle

of Magic Band alumni. I'm not sure if they're still producing new volumes in this series - they were coming out at an alarming rate for a while, but I haven't seen a new one in a few months, and it's possible they ran out of funding or critical darlings to cover. What, no *Winger: Under Review*? - Jeff Clark

## Bobby Darin: Seeing is Believing

[Hyena]

Always on the lookout for crooner talent, rumors indicate that the only performer Sinatra and Tony Bennett feared was Bobby Darin, because he tackled rock 'n' roll - something they were never comfortable doing. He influenced them both.

While most singers have a signature song identified as "their own,"

Darin had a half-dozen: "Splish Splash," "Dream Lover," "Mack the Knife," "Artificial Flowers," "Beyond the Sea" and "If I Were a Carpenter." It's no stretch to picture him as host on a home fix-it TV show called "If I Were a Carpenter," because he did just about everything else. His repertoire included Broadway tunes and pop hits of the day, from Neil Diamond's "Sweet Caroline" to Ray Charles' "Come Rain or Shine." Hell, he covered Muddy Waters and Smokey Robinson, so if he'd lived beyond the early '70s, he'd no doubt have

worked up his own interpretations of The Ramones' "Danny Says" and Joan Jett's "Bad Reputation"! He literally could do it all.

Culled from appearances on *Ed Sullivan*, where he duets with Connie Francis, to excerpts from his own music/variety TV show, this DVD finds him at his peak - singing, playing harmonica and vibes, and ad libbing between numbers in 19 performances, including a medley duet with Bobbie Gentry that shows his country side.

After watching this, all that needs to be said is: Bobby Darin isn't in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, but R.E.M. is! - David T. Lindsay

## Cut Shorts:

A Collection of Short Films and Music Videos by David Markey from 1974-2004

[Eclectic]

Best known for his Los Angeles-inspired cult classic *Desperate Teenage Lovedolls*, David Markey begins with what was customary for all inspiring filmmakers from his generation: a goofy, Super-8 amateur backyard monster movie where neighborhood kids run wild (including a youngish Jamie Hernandez) to reenact a movie their moms wouldn't let 'em see - *The Exorcist!* As he grows older, his subject matter turns bizarre, incorporating ghoulish, lousy looking Halloween masks, and in the case of *Lou Believers*, Sonic Youth use a magazine cover-photo of Lou Reed as some sorta disembodied tribute to the master. In his films, the glow of Hollywood is replaced by the crusty sunset of slow-leak



travelogs. In *Burning Palms (On Jennifer's Coffee Table)*, a smoking Sofia Coppola with cauliflower in her eyes drives the freeways searching for half-grabbed pathos. By *Stoner Park*, hippies and cowboy cops have devolved into potheads and Satanists. While denouncing celebrity, his films never got any better, as though he delights in disfiguring a dying studio system out of control. As a former member of the bands Sin 34 and Painted Willie, Markey through his short films helped define punk cinema, culminating with his feature *1991: The Year Punk Broke*.

- David T. Lindsay

## Radio On

[Plexifilm]

It's bewildering to find a post-punk movie that captures the doom and gloom disenchantment that perpetuated England's punk scene without any punk rockers to be found. Co-produced by Wim Wenders, using his cinematographer Martin Schaefer, British director Christopher Petit's visually engrossing black & white '70s enigma of wistful malaise among endless youth aggravation recalls the bleakness in Godard's *Alphaville* and the blasphemies that typified *Jubilee*. Set against a radio play-list featuring David Bowie, Devo and Wreckless Eric, the DVD features a remixed soundtrack

