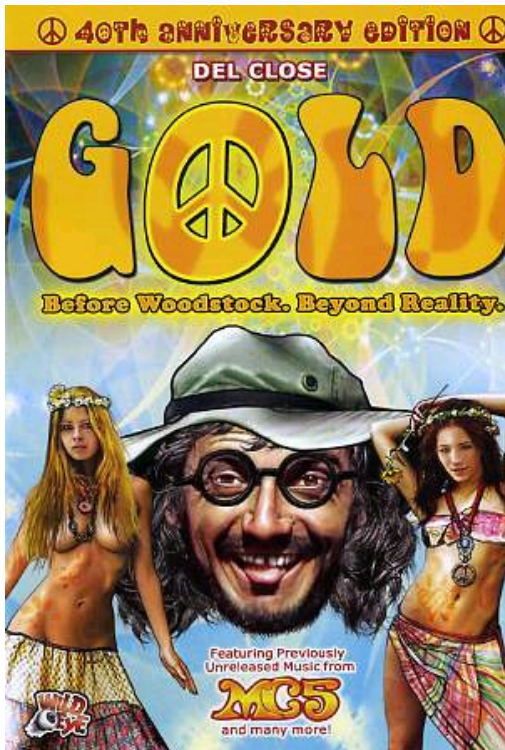


**FAME Review: Bob Levis, director: Gold: Before Woodstock. Beyond Reality (a film on DVD)**

Gold: Before Woodstock. Beyond Reality

Directed by [Bob Levis](#)

[MVD Visual](#) - MVDV4918 (DVD)

Available from [MVD Entertainment Group](#).

A review written for the Folk & Acoustic Music Exchange
by **Mark S. Tucker**
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There was an art-house movie tradition in the 60s and 70s, a sub-milieu of semi-amateur and lo-profile professional auteuring that yielded a bizarre and now classic small catalogue of alternative film-making. The most famous example, of course, was *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, a smash that also seems to have been the wave's death knell due to its phenomenal success (in return on investment terms, probably the most lucrative film ever made). Along the way, however, such odd gems as *Greaser's Palace* and *Zabriskie Point* joined an intermittent cavalcade of avant-garde and alt flicks (*Blow-Up*, *King of Hearts*, *Andalusian Dog*, etc.) floating in and out of mainstream acceptability, forming a new protest cinema. In the rush and tumult, some got waylaid. *Gold* was one of them. Wild Eyes, a psychotronic-styled outfit, and MVD Visual have joined forces to trot it back out for posterity.

Naturally, the storyline rambles like a motherfucker; the shots, cuts, and editing are chaotic; the soundtrack strange and oft Grateful Dead-y; and there's a generous assortment of crosscut timelines and soft core porn (even a small impromptu Kama Sutra lesson in the first segment) in a blend of musical, semi-drama, comedy, and all-around strangeness. Ostensibly, the plot devotes itself to an ersatz gold rush hoax that's really a ploy set up by a shady, bullshitting, bastard, penguin-suited businessman forming his own farflung private fiefdom. Really, though, the entire celluloid collage, shot in 1968 and every inch a record of the creative strangeness of the day, was put together to buck about six different Establishments while the counterculture was still going strong, a statement upon the insanities bred by capitalism (though the term is never used).

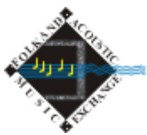
Skewering as many social mores as can be managed in a 90 minute span, every chance to get naked is taken, joints are toked, lonescan semi-coherency tends to rule, and no end of offbeat capers parade themselves beneath a soundtrack featuring the [MCS](#), [Barry St. John](#), [Ramblin' Jack Elliott](#), Sailcat, and others, many cuts previously unreleased. The point? That's quoted about halfway in: The law is bullshit, the law sucks. Among those proving it so are [Del Close](#) (associate of Nichols & May and considered one of the founders and geniuses of improv comedy, a guy who also appeared in *The Untouchables*, and *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*) and [Garry Goodrow](#) (*Bob & Carol & Ted & Alice*, *The Hollywood Knights*), not to mention a truly ragtag troupe of hippies, yuppies, freaks, and geeks. "Ragtag" in fact most aptly describes the entire film.

If you were one of the few who saw the movie back way back when, the boatload of bonus features will be irresistible: running lo-fi commentary by the director and Goodrow, further commentary from Upright Citizens Brigade founders Matt Walsh and Ian Roberts, an hour-long interview with the director, theater trailers, lobby cards, and a Garry Goodrow 'Tribute' show clip. The movie has never before been available in any home format, and, like so many of these off-off-offbeat resurrections, is unlikely to see reprinting very often in the future, so my advice is to grab it while the getting's good.

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