

## DRASTIC PLASTIC PRESS



### CAPTAIN BEEFHEART *UNDER REVIEW* MVD

Captain Beefheart, now retired from the music business, rarely gives interviews these days, so unfortunately he does not appear in this new documentary, but as is revealed here, Beefheart had much help in creating his unprecedented musical forms, and some of those musicians are on hand to explain the Captain's method (many fans still don't realize that CB wrote music on the piano—an instrument he couldn't play—or just whistled a tune, that members of his Magic Band would then transcribe). His savant-like techniques, and, as one former bassist puts it, his ability to make "everything he touches turn into art," resulted in some of the most unusual, interesting, and fantastic records to every fall under the ROCK umbrella.

As with other discs in the *Under Review* series, there are rare television and promotional clips, as well as European concert footage—all of which will delight the faithful. At nearly two hours, it's an hour too long for the newbie, but Beefheart fanatics (is there any other way to describe his followers?) will surely enjoy the complete overview of his career. After all this time, a couple of the critics interviewed are still obviously puzzled by the music of Captain Beefheart (which can't be anything but a good thing), while the Captain's ex-employees are remarkably devoted to him, making excuses for his legendarily eccentric behavior. Even the makers of this doc seem to want to protect him, consigning what little dirt there is to a short bonus feature.

Beefheart had his ups and downs artistically, and with the business itself, eventually retiring to concentrate on his visual art. Few make a conscious decision to walk away from this industry of their own free will, which says a lot about the man. Captain Beefheart's music continues to astonish and thrill those that are taken by it, but it's hard to say what affect, if any, *Under Review* will have on those not already under his spell.

--Bart Bealmear

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