

Captain Beefheart - Under Review / 2006 MVD / 180 Minutes /
<http://www.mvdb2b.com> / Reviewed 29 May 2006

Captain Beefheart is an example of a cult musician that practically everyone listens to, but like the Dead Milkmen and Love, I have no clue about the style of music or the allure that the artist provides. What "Under Review" does is show a documentary about the act, as well as throw in a few clips from the band. The fact that Beefheart went to school with Zappa is something fantastic to know or to throw into conversation; it also shows that there was something good in the water during their formative years. While the production value of the documentary is strong, with sharp footage of the band mates and other individuals interviews, some of the early footage is a little shaky.

This is due to the fact that the band was around at times in which the footage was not necessarily that strong); this should not be taken as a weakness of the documentary itself. "Under Review" is essentially a biography about the band, and the length documentary really does the band justice. At each different phase of the band's careers, there is an explanation of what members joined or exited the band, what singles or albums they came out with, and just a contextualization of where the band was at at the time. Some interesting things that are explained at points during this DVD is why the band's first album "Safe As Milk" had a constrained sound in regards to the sound that the band was capable at the time. While it is hard to really give someone holding a phone to their ear (without anyone on the other line) credit, there are technical details that further give individuals insight into the band.

For someone that has never heard any Captain Beefheart music before putting on this DVD, a few things surface. First off, I really want to hear more of the band's music than what is present on the DVD, and I realize exactly how influential the band was in regards to the popular music that followed after the band. The documentary goes beyond the band to show what influenced the band and their recordings. Information is given about the producers and record labels that Captain Beefheart worked with, and this is just something that furthers the knowledge that individuals can take from this DVD. With a number of humorous anecdotes present throughout the DVD, as well as the unintentional humor that is present during the creation of a number of the Captain Beefheart discs, "Under Review" is not a morose re-telling of the bands' history as much as it is a light-hearted but complete view into the historical box that the band found itself. Individuals that get this DVD without knowing the band will feel much the same way that I did when I finished the disc; I just wanted to pick up all of the Captain Beefheart albums and play them in order. I knew the history, but I still needed to know the rest of the music of the band.

Rating: 7.0/10

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