

*The Phantom's*  
**ROCK DOCS A GO-GO**

**DAWN OF THE DEAD: THE GRATEFUL DEAD & THE RISE OF THE SAN FRANCISCO UNDERGROUND (2012)**

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 D: Uncredited. Peter Albin, Tom Constanten, Robert Christgau, David Gans. 138 mins. (Sexy Intellectual/MVD Visual) 5/12

Your Phantom has never been much of a Deadhead (unless we're talking George Romero) but that didn't stop us from digging the latest musical exploration from the folks at Sexy Intellectual. After applying their journalistic and critical savvy to **Frank Zappa: The Freak-Out List** and **Robert Plant's Blue Note (VS #80)**, among others, the SI investigators set their sights on the '60s San Francisco scene, detailing how several highly accomplished (accent on high) musicians could combine their diverse talents and forge a fresh groove that would become the soundtrack for a regional subculture with a global impact. With a lineup that encompassed bluegrass pickers (Jerry Garcia), folkies (Bob Weir), R&B players (Ron McKernan) and cerebral avant-garde adventurers (Phil Lesh, Tom Constanten), the aggregate experienced several stages of evolution, from the acoustic Mother McCree's Uptown Jug Champions to the electric cover band The Warlocks to the ever-eclectic Grateful Dead. As in its previous rock docs, the SI team makes ample use of archival footage and expert talking heads, from surviving musicians, managers and scenesters to rock critics like *The Village Voice's* Robert Christgau and *Rolling Stone's* Anthony De Curtis, to put the Dead in perspective in an era marked by the ecologically ruinous (for the existing Haight-Ashbury community) "Summer of Love," intensifying internequine friction between mystical, hedonistic hippies and "the Movement's" hard-core politicos, encroaching corporate interests, and a nation at cultural and sometimes literal civil war. Through all this, the SI team never loses track of its main focus: in-depth musical exploration and analysis. On the downside, while **Dawn** pays ample attention to the eponymous outfit, it skips a bit on the rest of SF's fertile bandscape. Janis Joplin and Jefferson Airplane receive some due, along with brief performance clips, but other seminal groups, like Moby Grape, earn barely a mention. Still, this rates as a minor quibble given the doc's time restrictions and the subject's sheer scope. DVD extras include extended interviews, a chat with Ken Babbs, of Ken Kesey's Merry Pranksters fame, and biographies. For more about the Pranksters, meanwhile, scope out the doc **Magic Trip** (Magnolia Entertainment).

**METAL EVOLUTION: THE DEFINITIVE HISTORY OF HEAVY METAL & HARD ROCK (2011)** ⌘⌘⌘1/2

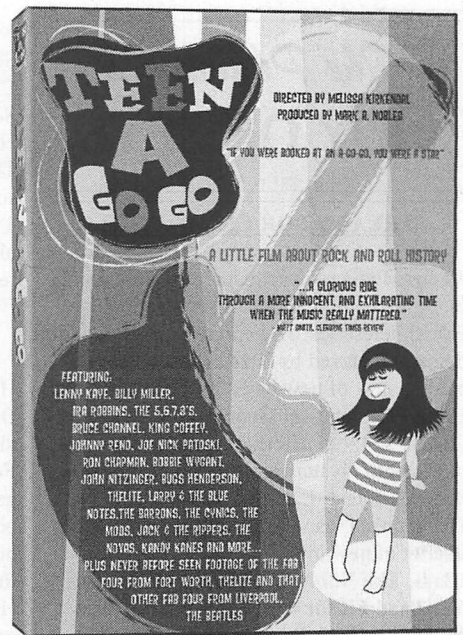
D: Sam Dunn, Scott McFadyen. Richie Blackmore, Arthur Brown, Alice Cooper, Slash, Lars Ulrich. 454 mins. (VH1) 3/12

Your Phantom has never been much of a metal-head either, so when the three-disc **Metal Evolution** turned up on our doorstep we figured we'd dip in for a look at some of its early roots-of-metal chapters dealing with Blue Cheer, Led Zep and other groups we dug during our deformatively years. But this Canada-based VH1 series, hosted by unassuming fan and co-director Dunn, is so addictively presented that we hung in for all 11 episodes, filling in gaps in our rock education and gaining greater appreciation for aggregates like Iron Maiden, Black Sabbath, and Korn. Lanky, long-haired Dunn supplies a solid contextual grounding as he travels the globe to trace heavy metal's various incarnations, from Glam and Thrash to Shock Rock (with a major nod to and interview with an old fave of ours, Arthur Brown, godfather of pyrotechnic rock) and Prog Metal. While Dunn openly fawns over his heroes (mostly "pure" metal figures from the classic '70s and '80s bands) and expresses his animosity toward other forms (e.g., Nu-Metal), he explores them all with an open mind. In addition to examining the minutiae of the multiple metal splinters, **Evolution** provides an overview of eternal teen rites of passage, the never-ending gang mentality pitting (to cite but one example) glam poseurs vs. death-metal doomniks (just as rockers mixed it up with mods and punks squared off against discophiles), the adolescent need for shared catharsis and occasional outbreaks of mindless violence (the Limp Bizkit riots at Woodstock 99). But mostly **Evolution** concentrates on the music and the differences in approach, instrumentation and technique among the pioneers in each metal subgenre. We'd love to see and hear similarly detailed series devoted to the blues (Martin Scorsese's **The Blues** took up some of that slack), doo-wop, rockabilly and other musical forms. In the meantime, **Metal Evolution** earns a place on our shelf beside **End of the Century: The Story of the Ramones (VS #55)**, **Metallica: Some Kind of Monster (VS #54)** and **Anvil: The Story of Anvil (VS #73)**, to say nothing of **This Is Spinal Tap**.

**TEEN A GO GO (2011)** ⌘⌘⌘

D: Melissa Kirkendall. Candy Chase, Lenny Kaye, Joe Nick Patoski. 78 mins. (Cinema Libre) 3/12

Director Kirkendall and producer Mark A. Nobles present an engaging, informative look at the hitherto largely unsung garage band and club scene that briefly flourished in Fort Worth, Texas in the mid-to-late '60s. Inspired, like thousands of other youthful groups around the globe, by the Beatles' resounding success, teenage would-be rock stars and wannabe babe magnets formed bands mixing British Invasion and R&B covers with the occasional (often derivative) original.



Soon, outfits like The Elite, The Barons, and the all-girl group The Kandi Kanes became local legends replete with steady gigs, regional recordings and their own rabid fan bases. Other Texas towns experienced similar root-music renaissances—rival Dallas delivered hit-makers like the Five Americans, while Houston produced Doug Sahn's Sir Douglas Quintet, the 13<sup>th</sup> Floor Elevators, and the Sherwoods (whose core members later formed Feo y Loco)—that made the occasional national splash, but Fort Worth musicians failed to rock outside the local box. It wasn't until avid regional-rock historians Miriam Linna and Billy Miller of *Kicks* magazine flipped over a batch of obscure 45s rediscovered in the '80s that Fort Worth began to receive its belated due as an erstwhile garage-rock hotbed. Kirkendall and Nobles relive the period via rare archival clips and sound bites, talking-head interviews with band survivors and supporters like musician/historian Lenny Kaye and author/*Texas Monthly* editor Joe Nick Patoski (himself the former manager of the briefly ascendant Houston livewire Joe "King" Carrasco). The doc digs deep into the differences between Dallas (slicker, poppier) and Fort Worth (grittier, with greater R&B overtones) rock and does an admirable job of bringing the scene to vibrant life. The flipside of the filmmakers' regional fervor is a blinkered view of the overall picture: We get little sense of what the scene survivors are doing today (few remain in the music biz) and no idea, for example, that Kandi Kanes co-founder and bassist Candy Chase, extensively interviewed here, went on to become a top touring and studio musician and singer/composer who still performs today. A few of these blanks are filled in via some entertaining extras, especially **A Beatles Story** and **The Making of the Fort Worth Teen Scene CDs** (Fort Worth even had its own minor-league Col. Tom Parker in the person of Major Bill Smith), but the omissions sent us scurrying to the Internet for further info. Still, this is a fun look back at a once-vital scene, a treatment that should be extended to other locales as well. ⌘