



SCOTT WALKER – 30 CENTURY MAN
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Stephen Kijak, the documentarian who followed New York movie geeks to entertaining effect in *Cinematica*, tracks down an even lesser spotted beast in this star-studded film. Tracing Scott Walker's journey from reluctant 60s teen idol to leftfield dignitary, this award-winning doc should please both neophytes and dedicated champions alike.

Scott Walker *30 Century Man* meticulously maps the artist's unique musical history. Scott Engel – as he was known to his mum – was initially championed by Eddie Fisher and marketed as a new Fabian in the late '50s. As one of the first musicians to master the electric bass, he found regular session work while still in his teens before joining Gary Leeds and John Maus to form The Walker Brothers in 1964. Though barely known in their native America, the band were a teenybopper sensation in this part of the world. (Mr. Walker, who makes for more agreeable company than his reclusive nature would suggest, recounts an unfortunate incident to camera in which rabid Dublin fans overturned the tour van with their heroes inside.)

His response to the frenzy was a retreat into experimentation. A run of solo albums culminated with the release of *Scott 4* in 1969. Though now recognised as his masterpiece, it was a commercial disaster at the time. After its swift deletion, he abandoned the darksome abstract imagery and Jacques Brel inspired gallop that characterised his late '60s output in favour of country and western karaoke.

If you're eager to hear material from this forgotten period, you're plain out of luck. The lost years encompassing *The Moviegoer* (1972), *Any Day Now* (1973), *Stretch* (1973), and *We Had It All* (1974) are rightly glossed over in favour of Walker's comeback efforts. Equally, those seeking personal gossip or an explanation as to how the sleeve notes of *Scott 2* came to be authored by "my friend Jonathan King" will go home empty handed.

Mr. Kijak studiously ignores psychology in favour of a grand pictorial discography. Still, his subject speaks with surprising openness on the thinking behind his extraordinary late resurgence, with particular reference to *Nite Flights with The Walker Brothers* (1977) and *Tilt* (1995). We are even granted access into the studio for the recent recording of *The Drift*. Watch in amazement as the artist assembles giant wooden blocks to simulate the sound of a glass on a bar counter or commands the engineer to hit meat until the precise sound in his head is replicated in more controlled conditions.

The thoroughness of his approach, a meticulousness that reminds one of the thin boundary between genius and Asperger's, goes a long way to explaining the extraordinary gaps between albums.

Though a lively parade of rock dignitaries including Jarvis Cocker, Damon Albarn and David Bowie (who also acted as the film's producer) give personal responses to favourite tracks, as ever, it's the music that does most of the talking. And so we get the tiny peek we desired without trashing the enigma. Quite right too.

Tara Brady