

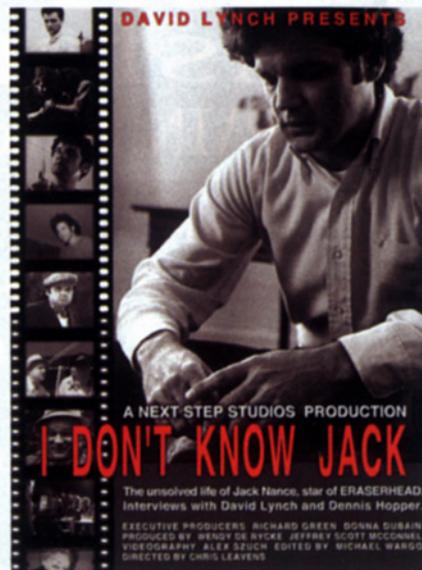
REPORTS The films of Richard Green.

JUST AT THE POINT when David Lynch's *Mulholland Drive* begins to kick into its seriously deranged final act, a goateed magician with a stentorian voice mounts a theater stage and, preparing his audience for the entrance of a possessed chanteuse, begins insisting, "There is no band... there is no band!" Like many things on planet Lynch, the motto's meaning remains murky and elusive, even as the slogan itself — much like *Twin Peaks*'s "wrapped in plastic" — lodges in the viewer's memory. More than a little of the impression the line makes has to do with the voice of the magician who delivers it: singer, actor, commercial-product pitchman and filmmaker Richard Green.

As a filmmaker, Green's main focus over the last decade has been a project entitled *7 Year Zig Zag*. A "film in rhyme and swing," the digitally-produced, autobiographical pic details Green's own times and travels, from his late-1960s' youth as an itinerate filmmaking hopeful to his 1990s incarnation as singer, bandleader and innovative forerunner of the recent swing band revival. (Learn more about *7 Year Zig Zag* and

Green's musical career at clubzigzag.com.)

Green established his production company, Next Step Studios, to facilitate the final stages of *7 Year Zig Zag*, but what's kept it afloat are the proceeds from a series of career-college commercials the company produces on the side. In fact, Next Step's become so successful that it now has a subsidiary called Biography Films that makes personal biographies of people's family members.



In the early 1970s, Green was involved with two San Francisco theater companies — Circus and Theater of Marvels — where he got to know a young actor named Jack Nance. Shortly thereafter, transplanted to L.A., Green again ran into Nance, along with Catherine Coulson (later known as *Twin Peaks*'s Log Lady) and Lynch, who were shooting *Eraserhead* at the time. "They came to see the opening show at the Mayfair Music Hall in L.A.," Green recalls, "where I was doing improvised verse. David liked my stuff, and we'd sometimes hang out together at Jack's place in Beechwood Canyon."

OTHER GREEN WORLDS

Green then lost touch with Lynch, only seeing him again at Jack Nance's funeral in early 1997 where they discussed a character, Abraxor the Magician, that Green had developed for a gig at a San Francisco fair. They next met during the shooting of *Mulholland Drive*. "David called me on a Friday," says Green, "and wanted to shoot the scene on the following Monday. It turned out to be one of the greatest days of my life." Green's current connection to Lynch, however extends beyond *Mulholland Drive*. Lynch is also an executive producer of *I Don't Know Jack*, first-time director Chris Leavens's biographical portrait of the late *Eraserhead* star, which will be released by Next Step Studios as a "David Lynch Presents" film. The doc is filled with rare, early glimpses of the actor, along with testimonials and reminiscences from old friends and Lynch-affiliated oddballs, including Dennis Hopper and Lynch himself.

As for his performance as Lynch's magician-of-the-moment, Green remains dazzled by the experience. "Personally," he admits, "I think my line in *Mulholland* is the key to the movie — There is no band, the whole thing's an illusion." Leave it to a prestidigitator to summarize Lynch's weird, wooly relationship to the meanings of things in his movies as nothing less than a false-bottomed box, custom-built for an astonishing, elusive and metaphysical disappearing act.

— Chuck Stephens

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