

# Wrapped in Plastic

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## 7 Year ZigZag

A film in rhyme and rythem

Reviewed By Craig Miller

**Starring** Richard Green (Storyteller/Nick), Robin Banks (Dreamgirl), Leslie Macker (Kitchen girl/Hedy), Caroline Davis (Lily), and The Zig Zag Band

**Written and Directed** by Richard Green

**Produced** by Richard Green and Donna DuBain

**Executive Producers** Richard Green and Gloria Green

**Directors of Photography** Dermott Downs, Cynthia Pushak, and Alexander Szuch

**Edited** by Michael Wargo

**Visual Effects** by Chris Leavens and Christopher Miller

**Music** by Dinan and Green

**Soundscape** by Webolution #9

2001; 84 minutes

While Richard Green served as executive producer on *I Don't Know Jack*, *7 Year ZigZag* is his own film—a work he wrote, directed, and starred in. It tells the (apparently at least semi-autobiographical) tale of "Nick" (Green), an artist/hippie of the sixties who dreams of making a feature film titled *The Doomsayer*, in which a man tries to warn about the coming end of the world but is ignored. Probably overwrought and preachy (based on the sparse information presented in *ZigZag*), *Doomsayer* attracts little interest. Nick realizes that the only way to make this film is to make another film that's a big success, thus giving him some clout in the movie industry. It's the time of *Saturday Night Fever*, so he decides to incorporate music into his next project—not disco music, in which he has no interest, but thirties swing.

The film will be called *The Next Step* and be about a group of people trying to raise funds to open a swing club. Several times the film is close to production, but each time something happens, sometimes at the last minute. Nick decides that the



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way to get the film rolling is to sell the music first, so he heads to Europe, where jazz is having a revival, and hopes to gather a following there, allowing him to make *The Next Step*, which, if successful, will then allow him to make *The Doomsayer*.

*7 Year ZigZag* becomes a story about the determination of an artist to overcome obstacles (and there are many more than those mentioned in our brief synopsis; in fact, the film's title is a clue) and follow his drive to create the art that speaks to his soul. This is, of course, not a unique theme (see, for instance, *Amadeus* and *The Whole Wide World* for a couple of excellent examples). What sets Green's film apart is the form, described in the movie poster as "a film in rhyme and swing." Green narrates the film in a rap-like rhyme. At first we thought that there was no way this could be maintained throughout a feature-length film without becoming tedious. And yet Green pulls it off, not only because of the quality of his voice (viewers of his performance in *Mulholland Drive* will need no convincing here), but because, on the whole, he makes the rhyme sound natural. Ex-

cept for an occasional forced line, there were long stretches where we didn't even notice the rhyme per se, because the rhythm, the beat, of the narration took center stage (along with, of course, the story that is being told through the narration). In retrospect, it's hard to imagine the film being done any other way.

As for the swing music, we'll admit to having next to no knowledge (or interest) in it before hand. It's all the more credit to Green, then, that we came away enjoying the soundtrack immensely. While not every song struck a chord with us, there were lots of songs that we thought were *great*. If Green was able to win us over to the sounds, we can only imagine how a swing fan would respond to the work.

We should also mention that the *Next Step* sequences that Nick is writing are presented in a fascinating black-and-white style that combines film and animation. It's hard to describe, but essentially the faces are photographed (and altered),

and the clothes are animated (rotoscoped, or the like). Something like that. You have to see it to understand how well it all works together.

*7 Year ZigZag* is a treat from beginning to end. We approached it with some trepidation (for us, "a film in rhyme and swing" served more as a warning than an enticement) and came away eager to see it again. Green has shown himself to be not only an accomplished musician, but also an exceptional filmmaker. As with *I Don't Know Jack*, *7 Year ZigZag* is not yet commercially available, but log onto the Web site ([www.clubzigzag.com](http://www.clubzigzag.com)) to learn more about this amazing work. If you're a swing fan, you'll definitely want to see this film. If you're not, you'll enjoy the film for its cinematic inventiveness—and by the end you'll be a swing fan, too.



An example of the cool animation in 7 Year ZigZag

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