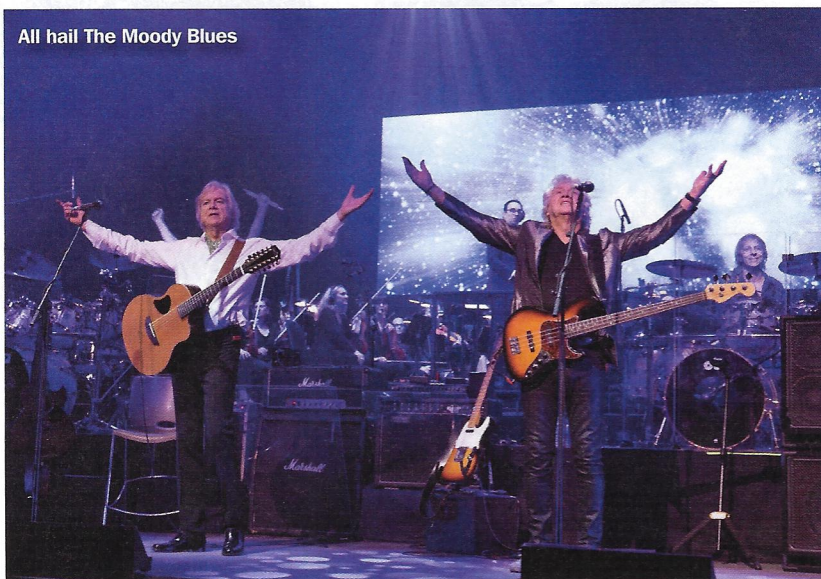


DVD★Reviews

All hail The Moody Blues



The Moody Blues

Days Of Future Passed Live

★★★★★

Eagle Vision ERBR 05345 (BD/DVD)

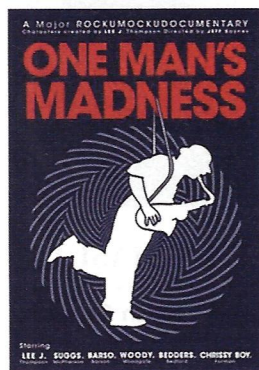
A long time coming

Though regarded as a cornerstone of progressive rock and justly praised for its pioneering blend of band and orchestra, it took 50 years for The Moody Blues' 1967 classic *Days Of Future Passed* to be played live in its entirety. A project two years in the making, the loss of original conductor Peter Knight's orchestral arrangements necessitated months of work for new conductor Elliot Davies and the Moodies themselves to prepare the album for its debut performance in 2017.

Filmed in Toronto, the band and a full orchestra conducted by Davies rose to the occasion to present a familiar classic in a dynamic new light, giving a performance faithful to the original, animated by the adrenaline of live performance, and by the power and presence of the ensemble effect filtered through contemporary in-concert sound technology.

Knight's links, fittingly described as "cinematic" by Justin Hayward, are appropriately dramatic, and the band and orchestra integrate seamlessly on *The Sun Set* and a goosebump-inducing *Nights In White Satin*, before the deserved reward of a standing ovation. Preceded by an energetic romp through nine hits, the show sounds and looks great, captured by cameras on, above and around the stage. This will be essential viewing for fans.

Rich Davenport



One Man's Madness

★★★★★

BMG cat no tbc

A pop phenomenon filtered through one funster

Few groups have embraced the demands of the promo video as enthusiastically as Madness, and in an outfit collectively not shy in front of a camera, sax player Lee Thompson is perhaps the biggest show-off, a born performer. Consequently, this tongue-in-cheek mockumentary of his life in and out of the band is an absolute hoot from start to finish.

Thompson's bandmates all make an appearance, but every other contributor (family members, musical contemporaries, business associates) are represented by Lee himself in a variety of disguises and miming to their recorded voices. It's a little unsettling at first, but the gimmick never gets in the way of a gag-packed tale of youthful petty crime, reminiscences of growing up in 70s London and the group's remarkable journey along the yellow brick road of fame.

Blackening up as The

Specials' Lynval Golding may raise a few eyebrows, but the recollections of his "sister" and musicologist Neil Brand's examination of the nuances of the songs Thompson penned for the group are genuinely fascinating.

The talking heads format is embellished by archive material (grainy footage of early gigs, *Top Of The Pops*, the band's own earlier film, *Take It Or Leave It*), adding informative historical weight to a light-heartedly curveball conceit that illustrates the man's formidable craft while never taking itself too seriously. Terry Staunton

Deconstructing The Beatles: An Educational Journey

★★★★★

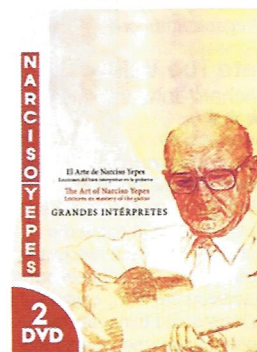
Culture Sonar (4DVD)

Chairman of the mortar board

There's a particularly poignant moment around halfway through *Looking Through A Glass Onion* – US musicologist Scott Freiman's lecture on *The White Album* – where he plays the first take of *While My Guitar Gently Weeps*. Freiman explains how George had been reading the *I Ching*, "He opens a book and decides he's going to write a song based on the first thing he sees, and he sees 'gently weeps.'" The audience giggles as George can be heard ordering a cheese, lettuce and marmite sandwich, before he begins the most tender, delicately stunning performance. "And believe it or not, George can't get the attention of anyone else and so he puts

the song aside."

Having taught a course on The Beatles at Yale University, Freiman is the perfect host for this series of "multimedia lectures" which seem at first as though they're just another re-treading of familiar ground, albeit in an engaging and entertaining form. But as each lecture goes on, like the titular onion, more and more layers of the story of the creation of four of The Beatles' most remarkable records (*Rubber Soul*, *Revolver*, *Sgt Pepper's...*, *The Beatles*) are revealed. Better than any podcast, and with a stunning selection of clips. Paul McGuinness



Grandes Intérpretes: The Art Of Narciso Yepes

★★★★★

Store For Music SFMDVD 223 (2DVD)

Flamenco a go-go

The cover of this two-disc set bears the subtitle "Lectures on mastery of the guitar," an apt description of this restored, six-part masterclass, recorded for Spanish television in 1970.

Whether you play or simply appreciate the instrument, this is a potential source of fascination for anyone with an interest in the history and development of the guitar, even if you don't know your arias from your Elgar when it comes to classical music. And by jingo, Señor Yepes can't half shred.

Yepes rose from humble origins to become one of the 20th century's most revered guitarists, later revolutionising both technique and the instrument itself, as the co-inventor of the 10-string model used here. As he tracks its evolution from the Baroque era beloved of Blackmore and Malmsteen to the last century with virtuosic performances of music from key Spanish, French and Italian composers, he delivers enlightening insights in an

avuncular fashion. A particular source of revelation comes as he explores the role of improvisation, not commonly associated with classical music, in the interpretation of Baroque pieces.

Presented in black-and-white with clear audio (English subtitles) and picture, this is an enjoyable way to explore the history of the guitar, whatever your musical taste.

Rich Davenport

Lost In Vagueness

★★★★★

Dartmouth Films DPMOVIE 385651

Festival frolics in a stop-start film

Despite attracting international superstar performers and near blanket BBC television coverage since the turn of the century, Glastonbury might have struggled to survive were it not for the input of one fledgling entrepreneur and his equally maverick cohorts. That's the view of festival head honcho Michael Eavis in this intermittently engaging documentary about the people behind *Lost Vagueness*, the Somerset shindig's out-there, unofficial "after party."

Traveller Roy Gurnitz corralled a corner of Eavis' Worthy Farm to present a weird and wonderful cavalcade of cabaret, burlesque, circus, casino and even a wedding chapel to which festival-goers flocked once the music stages went dark. Its success led to money-spinning corporate bookings – not always welcomed by some of Gurnitz's off-the-radar associates, and director Sofia Olins' film attempts to examine the contradictions inherent in a troupe of free spirits succumbing to the temptations of big business.

It's not an altogether satisfying documentary, in part let down by the director's flat and pedestrian narration, plus the frequently irritating self-congratulatory tone of many of the *Lost Vagueness* lynchpins.

It was an undeniably thrilling experience for its thousands of visitors (Norman Cook and Madness sing its praises to the hilt), but the film only rarely conveys the mind-blowing and bizarre atmosphere of actually being there. Terry Staunton