

Newport Jazz Festival



Just in time to commemorate the 50th anniversary, Quantum Leap and Music Video Distributors have released the *1962 Newport Jazz Festival* DVD. The DVD is 60 minutes long and features performances by the Oscar Peterson Trio, The Duke Ellington Orchestra, Count Basie, Roland Kirk and others. There is also a special section with biographies and discographies on the performers.

The star line-up makes the Newport DVD an exciting event. Roland Kirk delivers one of the best performances. Kirk, who was legally blind, plays the flute, saxophone, and clarinet all in one song at a frenetic pace that both amazes and humbles. Joe Williams and Jimmy Rushing's duet with Count Basie and his orchestra

2004 marks the 50th anniversary of the Newport Jazz festival. The first festival was held in 1954 in the resort town of Newport, Rhode Island and was the first American jazz festival. Over the years, greats like Duke Ellington, Billie Holiday, and Miles Davis have graced the Newport stage and produced some of the defining performances of their careers. Today the festival, considered to be the granddaddy of American music festivals, is held in multiple cities and continues to be a sought-after venue for premier artists.

brings to mind the concept of the voice as instrument as they seamlessly blend with Basie's legendary piano and the band's smooth horns.

Unfortunately, the festival's great moments are compromised by poor digital re-mastering and sound quality. During many of the performances the music is barely audible and the visuals are so blurry that the artists are hardly recognizable. More time is spent trying to decipher the music than actually enjoying it, which puts a plug in an otherwise stellar offering. -- *yaisha c. harding* **10**