

The magician and two former buddies hold auditions for arch-villains to challenge them in *Fallen Arches*, while the professor tries to find a practical application for the 'walking eye' he has developed. In the funny *Guess Who's Coming to State Dinner?*, the ghost of Lincoln helps the boys prevent an assassination attempt when everyone sleeps over at the White House. There are some surprises in *I Know Why the Caged Bird Kills*, but basically, a demon helps the professor and the magician find the professor's sons, who have been abducted, while the arch-villain's henchmen attempt to help him get back with his girlfriend. For the highly amusing *Viva Los Muertos!*, grown up and quite skuzzy versions of the **Scooby-Doo** clan happen upon the heroes' compound just as the professor is developing zombies from the arch-villain's dead henchmen. Finally, in the elaborate two-parter, *Showdown at Cremation Creek*, everyone, good and bad, including David Bowie, is invited to the wedding of the arch-villain and his girlfriend, except that another villain decides it is a good chance to eliminate all of his rivals at once. Also featured on the platter are 21 minutes of deleted and alternate scenes—again, some of them are fairly funny (and clearly afoul of standards and practices)—and a less amusing gag tour of the animation studio.

Every episode on **Season 2** has a commentary by the creators. The talks are earnest and even worthwhile, but unlike **Season 1**, they rarely address the actual conception and production of the cartoon. "Oh! Did you know that I had a real 'weapons closet' when I was a little kid, full of, like, chair legs and stuff that looked like tong fas. It was in the garage. It was like an old coat closet that my parents meant to be busted up some day, and I had like put nails on it, so when you opened it, it was all the weapons, but it was nothing but like chains from old swing sets and chair legs that resembled tong fas and stuff. It was the most retarded thing, ever."

Pooh again

Walt Disney Home Entertainment has released **The Many Adventures of Winnie the Pooh** as a *Friendship Edition* (UPC#78693672-3632, \$30), but there is not a substantial improvement over the 25th Anniversary Edition we reviewed in Sep 03. The full screen picture and 5.1-channel Dolby Digital sound are unchanged and in fully acceptable condition. The 73-minute 1977 feature is accompanied by the 25-minute *A Day of Eeyore* short, the 25-minute retrospective featurette, the still frame gallery, the game and the Carly Simon music video that all appeared on the previous release. Where the older release had a Spanish track in 5.1 and a French track in standard stereo, both tracks are in 5.1 on the new release. There are still optional English subtitles.

Added to the new release is a sporadic trivia subtitled track that pretty much has nothing that isn't covered in the retrospective featurette, a sing-along song segment, a read-along segment, and a 24-minute episode from the for-toddlers-only cheap-looking computer animated *My Friends Tigger & Pooh* program—not to be confused with the fine Saturday morning cartoon series—which seems to be patterned after **Blue's Clues**, in which the characters have to figure out who has been stealing the rabbit's radishes, and, in the second half, what happened to the tiger's shadow when the sky becomes overcast.

Songs from the life of

An excellent primer on the formative part of Leonard Cohen's art and career, **Leonard Cohen Under Review 1934-1977**, has been released by Sexy Intellectual (UPC#823564509792, \$20). Combining interviews, archival footage and performance clips, the 87-minute program supplies a biographical profile of Cohen's youth and time spent as a poet and novelist, before moving on (in a biographical context) to a satisfying deconstruction of his brilliant first three and fifth LPs and the disastrous sixth LP (the latter produced by Phil Spector). There are no complete songs, but there are healthy clips of many numbers, explanations of some of the more abstract lyrics, and an analysis of Cohen's compositional dynamics. There is no interview with Cohen himself, but that shortcoming aside, the program is a highly satisfying supplement to Cohen's music, and an excellent introduction for those who haven't yet become immersed in his passions.

The full screen picture is in fine shape and the stereo sound has a nominal dimensionality at times. There is no captioning. Also featured is a 4-minute outtake, a trivia quiz, and text profiles of the interviewees.

Lionsgate released the 2005 theatrical documentary, **Leonard Cohen: I'm Your Man** (UPC#031398204343, \$20), which somewhat disingenuously intercuts a Cohen interview with clips of a concert of cover performances from artists such as Rufus Wainwright, Nick Cave and U2. It's terrific to hear the songs and interesting to hear how the performers interpret them, but to pin that title on the film, and to give it such a prominent promotion (it played at Sundance) will undoubtedly leave viewers disappointed with the actual program. That said, the DVD is a bit more worthwhile. The picture is in letterboxed format only, with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1 and an accommodation for enhanced 16:9 playback. The color transfer is bright and sharp. The 5.1-channel Dolby Digital sound has a strong dimensionality and clear tones. There are optional English and Spanish subtitles ("Y te alimenta con té y naranjas que vienen de la China."), another 4 minutes of interview footage with Cohen, and 18 minutes of additional songs, including The Handsome Family doing *Famous Blue Raincoat*. The director, Lian Lunson, also supplies a commentary track, talking mostly in general terms about how she put the film together and what she thinks of the artists. She doesn't say

too much about her experiences with Cohen, but now and then she lets something slip out. "The line, 'You told me again, you preferred handsome men, but for me you would make an exception,' I asked him about that, 'Did Janis Joplin say that to you?' and he said, 'No, Nico said that to me.'"

Heavy metal heritage

An exhaustive three-platter collection of concerts and videos from Iron Maiden's former lead singer, **Bruce Dickinson Anthology**, is available from Sanctuary Visual Entertainment (UPC#060768843097, \$25). The DVD is not captioned.

The first platter contains a live concert program running 88 minutes and entitled *Dive! Dive! Dive!* from a 1990 tour, in which Dickinson is still quite strongly connected to his heavy metal roots. The full screen picture is soft but workable, and the stereo surround sound has plenty of energy. Also featured on the first platter is a 56-minute live concert entitled *Skunkworks*, from 1965, in which Dickinson begins to assert what in relative terms is a softer, or at least cleaner sound. He also trimmed his hair at some point. The full screen picture is even fuzzier than *Dive! Dive! Dive!*, but in the context of the anthology, it is not a problem, and the stereo sound is adequate.

The second platter presents a third concert program, from 1998, *Scream for Me Brazil*, running 60 minutes, in which Dickinson's hair is even shorter and his music dreamier, though it seems a step down from the stronger synthesis of old and new in *Skunkworks*, and is almost parodistic of his earlier efforts. The full screen picture is weakly lit but effectively transferred. The stereo sound also has the least amount of dimensionality, and the inability of the bass to be fully replicated may be part of why the show is less satisfying than the others.

The third platter contains fourteen music videos produced between 1990 and 2005, and running, with the inclusion of Dickinson's introductions to each cut, a total of 115 minutes. Most are reasonably fun, full of sex, violence, bizarre esotery, and occasional slapstick, such as one expects from such efforts. The picture quality varies, and some are letterboxed while others are not, but in general the color transfers are good and the stereo sound is passable. Also featured on the platter is a 1980 featurette, *Biceps of Steel*, running 15 minutes, which is sort of a mini-rock opera rendition of *Samson and Delilah*, and a 48-minute interview with Dickinson from 2005 about his *Tyranny of Souls* album.

A journey through punk

A fairly comprehensive oral history of punk music, **Punk: Attitude**, is available in a two-platter set from Fremantle Media (UPC#187-323000082, \$40). The 2005 film runs 88 minutes and appears on the first platter, combining interviews with many people who were on the scene—mostly in New York, but with references to London and Los Angeles—with fantastic archival clips. Songs are not played all the way through, but there are enough excerpts to make the film's music component highly satisfying. As for the interviews, which tell the story of the music's rise in a reasonably chronological fashion, they are extensive enough to present a legitimate history, and yet personal enough to really convey a first hand view of the movement.

"Some of the safety pins and the stapled cuffs and things like that were more of a necessity of people actually trying to hold their clothes together."

"And then in London, we'd see these pictures of kids who called themselves, 'punks,' and they'd have safety pins all over the place. They'd ripped the clothing on purpose, just so they could buy a whole bunch of safety pins and put safety pins in the rips."

The picture is presented in letterboxed format only, with an aspect ratio of about 1.78:1 and an accommodation for enhanced 16:9 playback. The color transfer looks fine. Most of the clips are monophonic, but there are occasional stereo passages, and generally, the audio is an effective mirror of the era. There are optional English subtitles. Also featured on the first platter are text profiles of the interviewees and a 'family tree' of punk bands and subgenres.

The second platter contains a diverse collection of featurettes including a similar 22-minute piece specifically on Los Angeles punk, a 10-minute interview with Henry Rollins, a 15-minute interview with Dave Goodman of the Sex Pistols, and 89 minutes of outtake interviews from the feature organized around specific themes such as fashion, fanzines, women musicians and so on.

Irish rock

A 58-minute collection of performance clips by a Northern Ireland rock band, **Stiff Little Fingers in Concert Handheld & Rigidly Digital**, has been released by MVD (UPC#022291449690, \$20). The band actually dabbles in a variety of styles, from reggae to retro pop (to the inevitable Irish drinking song), but they always have an aggressive beat and articulate, intelligent vocals. The full screen clips are mostly from concerts and are in different levels of quality, but the view of the band is always clear. There are introductions to most of the songs and visual cutaways of the band relaxing and other footage during the performances on the 2003 program. The 5.1-channel Dolby Digital sound has the indistinctive separations of a live recording and a reasonable amount of energy. There is no captioning. Also featured is a 20-minute interview with the band.