

> Resident Evil: Damnation (2012/Computer Animated/Sony Blu-ray) + Resident Evil: Retribution (2012/Titan Books Paperback Adaptation by John Shirley)  
 > Sister Act (1992) + Sister Act 2 (1993/Disney Blu-ray + DVD)  
 > The Walking Dead: The Complete Second Season (2011/Anchor Bay Blu-ray)  
 > San Francisco 49ers: Team Of The '80s (Dynasty Collection/Gaiam Vivendi DVD)  
 > Bait 3D (2011/Anchor Bay Blu-ray w/DVD)  
 > Dark Shadows (2012/Warner Blu-ray w/DVD)  
 > Ghosts Of The Abyss 3D (2003/Disney Blu-ray 3D w/Blu-ray 2D and DVD)/Titanic: 100 Years In 3D (2012/A&E/History Blu-ray 3D w/Blu-ray 2D)/Titanic At 100: Mystery Solved (2012/A&E/History DVD)

David Markey's **Circle Jerks: My Career As A Jerk** (2012) is a decent documentary on the famous Los Angeles Punk band who stayed independent as long as they could, then when they finally signed with a big record label, missed the boat, had tragedy and disaster in addition to it and even lost their street cred when teen pop songstress dated one of the band members and sang on one of their singles for the big label album.

In between are some crazy stories, a rare look at the history of bands who were being ignored by the majors as soon as the 1980s began for some 'mysterious reason' (they formed in 1979) but they were also sometimes their own enemies and most of the (interviewed here) are lucky they survived. Markey (**1991: The Year Punk Broke, The Slog Movie**) definitely knows what questions to ask, what the story is, what the history is and the interviews (which also include their friends, other musicians like Henry Rollins) and often rare video clips make this one of the year's music surprises. Especially because it is not only also about Punk and its indie status but about the semi-fall of the major record labels more interested in safe music and back catalog than new music, even non-Punk fans should see this one.

Extras include Bonus Interviews and Deleted Scenes.

The biggest goal of the two-part **Freddie Mercury: The Great Pretender** (2012) documentary is to not let it be another chapter on just Queen, but we get some of that work here, yet Mercury had more solo work than many realize and this well-made biographical look at his life goes into a few places a Queen-only program could not. We again get interviews with friends, the other band members and those involved with making the music and videos for that band and especially Mercury solo.

It is a sad story at times of a very talented man getting AIDS, being alone on some level always and not knowing where he wanted to go except when it came to music, for which he was supremely creative. Nice to have it on Blu-ray, extended interviews and making of **Barcelona**, as well as an illustrated brief booklet with informative text are the extras.

**Gary Moore: Blues For Jimi** (2012) has the singer/guitarist getting together with former members of bands with Jimi Hendrix Dave Bronze and Darrin Mooney to play a 74-minutes jam session of classics like *Purple Haze*, *Hey Joe* and *Voodoo Child* and delivering a pretty good show, though I wish it were longer. Though you hear many Hendrix covers, these actually work and the trio (with two guests at certain points) does a really good job throughout. This is also more than compatible with the several **Montreux** titles by Moore Eagle has released over the years and a tad better than the **Phil Lynott** tribute show Eagle issued on Blu-ray, all reviewed elsewhere on this site.

It is for fans only for the most part, but those interested in Hendrix and his sound may find the 12-song set additionally interesting. An illustrated brief booklet with informative text is the only extra.

**The Groundhogs: Live At The Astoria** (1998) is the only concert footage of the Rock/Blues band where they perform 11 tracks pretty much in their prime. I had hardly heard of them and barely remember any of these songs, but it is archival and at 81 minutes, an honest, complete record of the band. It is rough in a few ways, but anyone who is a fan will love it and interested in seeing it will find it to be an interesting intro to the band. There are no extras.

Finally we have The Village Brothers' **Out The Gate** (2012) which starts out with great promise as a Reggae drama about young musicians coming from Jamaica and instead of settling for Kingston, go to the U.S. in hopes of big success. Early on, you expect this might be another **The Harder They Come** (for which it has more than a few similarities to) or **Rockers** (the two great Reggae films, both reviewed elsewhere on this site), then the script gives up, we go from some Hip Hop music to all Hip Hop and the

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narrative never recovers.

That's a shame because this began as something interesting that might have had something to say, but once all become Americanized (and not just the Hip Hop), this becomes like every other music-industry-revenge formula release we have suffered through. That's a shame, because if the makers and unique cast of unknowns had stayed on track, this could have been a nice surprise. That did not happen, so it becomes a dud and never recovers.

Trailers, the Hollywood Premiere and a Music Video are the only extras.

The anamorphically enhanced 1.78 X 1 image on **Beatles**, **Circle** and **Gate** are all softer than I would have liked with motion blur, location video issues and in the case of **Circle**, more rough vintage analog video than you might imagine unless you are a fan. The 1.33 X 1 image on **Groundhogs** is also soft, yet on par with the newer semi-HD productions. Oh well. That leaves 1080i 1.78 X 1 digital High Definition image performance on the two Blu-rays here the best playback performers by default, but I am giving **Jimi** the benefit of the doubt as it is darker than your average concert and will be an issue for people, especially when the screen seen on is larger, the more it might annoy said viewers. **Mercury** has its share of old analog video.

The DTS-HD MA (Master Audio) 5.1 lossless mix on **Jimi** is the sonic winner here for its consistent soundfield and fine overall recording, while the PCM 2.0 Stereo is also not bad, but no match for the DTS. PCM 2.0 Stereo is the only soundtrack on **Mercury**, but it has some Pro Logic surrounds and the music is transferred well for the most part. Still, it is sometimes weak and while interview recordings are fine, they are also simple. All the DVDs have mixed, lossy Dolby Digital 2.0 Stereo mix, save **Gate**, which tries to upgrade its sound to a 5.1 only mix, but it is beyond obvious that its soundtrack has too many issues and this should have never been attempted.

- Nicholas Sheffo

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