

The Sun Herald

South Mississippi's Newspaper

Lennon's legacy, Versace's violent end and Ricky's road trip recordings

This week's column kicks off with the final DVD in the "Final 24" series, followed by another volume of MVD's "Rare and Unseen" collection. Lastly, I've compiled a list of recordings that fall into the wide category of "good road trip music."

'Rare and Unseen,' John Lennon (MVDvisual, 5 stars)

Like the Rolling Stones volume reviewed on May 14, this May 18 Lennon DVD features original rare film clips, videos, newsreels, and photographs of the extremely successful social activist/musician John Lennon.

There are vintage clips of the Beatles at airports, in news conferences, and a few silent onstage video moments. John's answers range from non-sensical and irreverent to extremely thoughtful, depending on the subject matter and situation. Lots of later interviews with John and Yoko lean more toward their efforts to promote world peace, which was and still is a worthy cause. The later clips show a man at peace with himself and the causes he was espousing, and we're left to wonder what musical/social/other movements John Lennon may have carried the banner for if his life hadn't ended so early.

'Final 24: Gianni Versace — His Final Hours,' (MVDvisual, 4 stars)

This April 20 DVD episode differs from the music-related ones reviewed May 14, and even from the one about celebrity Nicole Brown Simpson, because I knew nothing about fashion designer Versace.

The DVD filled me in on his background: he grew up as the son of a poor seamstress in southern Italy, designing his first dress at age nine. He moved to Italy's fashion capital, Milan, after a short college stint. He came along at the right time; and, by celebrating the female form with unusual fabrics, created a fashion sensation.

Versace encountered his eventual murderer Andrew Cunanan in a San Francisco gay bar while Gianni was in town to design opera costumes. Cunanan was a two-bit hustler/drug addict who eventually set off on an East Coast murder spree en route to Miami's South Beach and Versace's lavishly decorated mansion. Two shots to Gianni's head ended his life, and Cunanan shot himself shortly thereafter. This volume is just as informative as the other ones in the series, and makes me look forward to the June 29 wave: Sid Vicious, John Belushi, Anna Nicole Smith and David Koresh.

Read more: <http://www.sunherald.com/2010/05/27/2212811/lennons-legacy-versaces-violent.html#ixzz0pDqz1NdA>

- Ricky Flake