

cratered), a throbbing "Come Back, Baby" and an eerie "Cuckoo," along with bonus versions of "Looking for a Home" and the old blues standard "Candy Man." Camera work is tight and the lighting bright for those looking to cop technique.

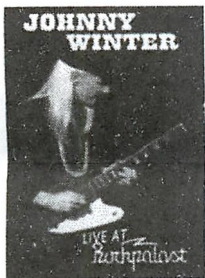
Also from the same period, Jansch's one studio album with Conundrum, *Thirteen Down*, has just been reissued on Stefan Grossman's Guitar Workshop label. Former Pentangle vocalist Jacqui McShee is among the guests, and it too is a gem. (Bill Wasserzieher)

JOHNNY WINTER - Live At Rockpalast (MVD)

As many old-guard rockers conformed to AOR and disco in the face of late '70s commercial pressure, Johnny Winter went back to an even earthier blues than the rocked-up kind that won him fame earlier. Commercially, he paid the price, but his integrity was intact at gigs such as this 90-minute set for German TV in April 1979.

To be sure, one can't get by on integrity alone, as exemplified by overlong versions of "Mississippi Blues" and "Susie Q" and especially "I'm Ready," where Winter grabs a bass and defers guitar duties to bassist Jon Paris, who proceeds to showboat with clichéd bar band licks. But the other role reversal performance, a cover of Johnny Burnette's "Rockabilly Boogie," smokes (Paris redeems himself), as do covers of Junior Wells' "Messin' With the Kid," Sleepy John Estes' "Divin' Duck" and a rompin' blues medley where Winter strikes with his trademark white lightning leads over the groove of Paris and drummer Bobby (T) Torrello, who have a good feel for rock and blues alike.

If it's not perfect, *Live At Rockpalast* is at least a solid artifact from a band that refused to sound like the times and was much better for it. (Doug Sheppard)

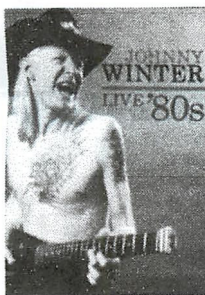


JOHNNY WINTER - Live Through the '80s (MVD)

Although Johnny Winter has never been a chart-topper, there was a time when his music intersected with the popular sound of the day, which for the most part meant Rock & Roll with capital Rs, much of it blues-based and played loud. Johnny was integral to the zeitgeist of the heavy rock audience at the time, as evidenced by the fact that guys at concerts took to hollering "rock & roll!" in their best Johnny Winter voice. The music eventually changed, but not Winter.

The cover of this DVD claims it's the "definitive document of Johnny's career in the '80s," and that's pretty accurate, considering that Winter did stick to what he knew best—cranking out hard-edged blues and bluesy rock, squeezing out intricate riffs at light speed through a guitar that sounds like feral cats mating atop a pile of broken glass while he's bellerin' out the vocals.

This DVD consists of a ragtag collection of videos with overall decent sound but wide-ranging image quality. The first segments were filmed at Massey Hall in Toronto and have the blotchy quality of a second-generation VHS tape. It then moves to a better-quality but dark footage from the Roskilde festival in Denmark, the highlight of which is Winter abruptly ending his performance and storming off the stage after someone throws something at him.



Then there is a segment shot at a place called the Casbah in Nashua, New Hampshire, that looks like someone captured it with a cell phone, except it's from 1984. But Winter does perform a pretty sweet version of "Please Come Home for Christmas."

Also included also several music videos from Winter's stint on Alligator Records, one of which used to play on MTV when MTV aired such things. It's either amusing or frightening, depending on your perspective. Winters bursts through the swingin' doors of a western bar in full guitar-slinger persona and bounces through Lonnie Brooks' "Don't Take Advantage of Me," tearing off his shirt with one hand while still pretending to play guitar with the other. All the while big-haired women fawn over him while their boyfriends get PO'd. Johnny Winter, sex symbol? Yep, in the end the gals all clamor for his blanched spider-like body while the guys beat the crap out of each other.

The disk is rounded out with decent video from Swedish TV and more blurry concert footage, this time from Pistoia, Italy, with Winter playing outdoors in the Piazza Duomo while the crowd gets drenched in a downpour.

It's those kind of fans, people who would stand in the rain at night to see him wheedle away on his guitar, to whom I recommend this DVD. Them, and obsessive completists who have a hole in their collection that can only be filled by *Johnny Winter Live Through the '80s*. (Jerry Parker)

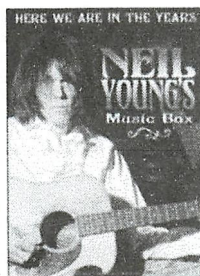
NEIL YOUNG - Here We Are in the Years: Neil Young's Music Box (Sexy Intellectual)

Neil Young once likened himself to a giant sponge that soaks up everything it hears. Add to that image a flannel shirt and maybe ears the size of Disney's Dumbo and you have a dead-on caricature—a caricature being an exaggeration of the truth about its subject.

In Young's case, he has heard everything in popular music and absorbed it all. How else to explain a 40-plus career that has included playing Motown-ish Stones covers alongside Rick James in the Mynah Birds, pioneering country-rock with the Buffalo Springfield, bringing an electric jolt to CSNY, thrashing with Crazy Horse, going off the Interstate for *Harvest*, punking it up on *Rust Never Sleeps*, devolving with Devo, the blues-noting and *Trans* experiments, grunging with Pearl Jam and, ultimately, proving growing old needn't mean becoming an oldies act.

As talking heads Anthony DeCurtis (*Rolling Stone*), Nigel Williamson (*Uncut*), Richie Unterberger, Johnny Rogan and Ned Raggett pronounce on *Neil Young's Music Box*, he is the one '60s artist who hasn't become stuck in time. Young has gone from fresh-faced to grizzled and consistently responded to what he's heard, often brilliantly. He may have a high, cracked voice capable of reducing a music teacher to tears and a guitar style given to bluntness, but Young's back catalog is stacked with absolute must-haves.

That is the frequently expressed message on this 157-minute DVD. DeCurtis & Co trace Young's career from childhood when he saw Elvis and then the Beatles on television through just before the recent lark of putting Buffalo Springfield back together ("We didn't break up; we've been on a long hiatus"). Besides the critics' observations, we also get observations from early bandmate Ken Smyth on when he and Neil formed the Squires in Winnipeg; Fireballs guitarist George Tomsco ("Torquay") connecting Young to such instrumental bands as his own as well as the Ventures and the Shadows; Chris Darrow of



Kaleidoscope reminiscing about their California halcyon days; and others who were there along the way.

There are plenty of performance clips, though none of them extended, and a fair number of useful bits about where Young has found his influences—Roy Orbison's operatic style for "Flying on the Ground Is Wrong" and "Birds"; the Stones' "Satisfaction" for "Mr Soul" and "Lady Jane" for "Borrowed Tune"; Bert Jansch's "Needle of Death" for "Ambulance Blues"; and Dylan's "Desolation Row" for "Last Trip to Tulsa." Think of this DVD as a Thinking Fan's Guide to Neil Young. (Bill Wasserzieher)

V.A. - WHEELDLE'S GROOVE: Seattle's Forgotten Soul of the 1960s and '70s (Cinewax/Light in the Attic)

Overlooked nationally during its time and not even discovered by most collectors until recently, Seattle's late '60s/early '70s soul and funk scene may have been the unluckiest in America. But as the first one to get its own documentary, its bad luck has run out.

More or less visual liner notes to *Light in the Attic's* 2004 CD/double LP compilation of the same name, *Wheedle's Groove* traces Seattle soul and funk not necessarily chronologically but by focusing individually on rare records. Through interviews with musicians, disc jockeys such as DJ Mr Supreme (who unearthed many of the records), producers including Kearney Barton and one-time Seattle-ite Quincy Jones, this DVD offers the stories of such forgotten Emerald City artists as Black on White Affair, Ron Buford, Patrinell Staten, Robbie Hill's Family Affair, Ural Thomas (one of the few with a major label release) and Cold, Bold & Together, which featured a young Kenny G (who's interviewed).

Interwoven into the narrative are anecdotes about local clubs, record labels, the city and especially its culture, which undoubtedly made the scene unique. While facing segregation from clubs that refused to book black acts and subtler forms of racism that prompted some to join the local chapter of the Black Panthers, Seattle's African-American population—concentrated in the central district (CD) neighborhood—seemed to live better than blacks in other major US cities. Plus, while integrated bands weren't strictly a Seattle phenomenon, it's interesting to note that virtually all Seattle funk groups featured both black and white musicians, producing a sound which reflected the grit and rawness of '60s Northwest rock'n'roll, with a slightly higher R&B quotient than funk from the South, Midwest or the coasts.

To be sure, Seattle soul and funk didn't always measure up to the scenes in those other regions, but who cares? Every scene should get a documentary like this one. (Doug Sheppard)



Cold Bold Group, ca. 1974 (T Gable Archive)