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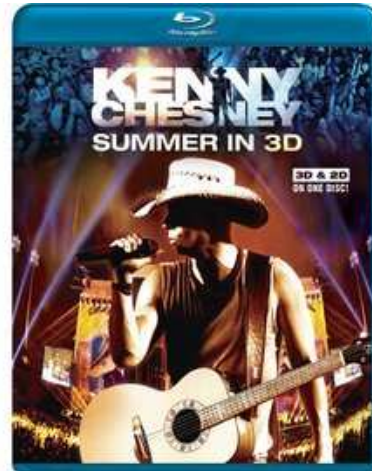
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Kenny Chesney – Summer In 3D (2009/Image Blu-ray 3D) + Country Strong (2010/Sony Blu-ray) + Kylie – Rare & Unseen (MVD DVD)

Picture: B & B-/B-/C Sound: B-/B-/C Extras: C+/C-/D Main Programs: B-/C-/B-



I have rightly been complaining about how mad music has been in recent years and it is not because of age, but the lack of quality. This also means anyone doing anything well is not getting enough credit and others are not being given the chance they deserve. In the Country genre, it is especially a disaster with most of the artists sounding like warmed-over 1970s Rock and the few willing to take chances (especially political) has made the genre a sick spoof of itself.

Fortunately, there are still artists that are for real and represent how great the genre can be. **Kenny Chesney – Summer In 3D** is a look at the rightly highly popular singer/songwriter on tour in what remains one of the few music Blu-ray 3D titles to date. It falls somewhere in between the impressive **Lang Lang: Live In Vienna 3D** which you can read about at this link:

[http://www.fulvuedrive-in.com/review/10675/Lang+Lang:+Live+In+Vienna+3D+\(2](http://www.fulvuedrive-in.com/review/10675/Lang+Lang:+Live+In+Vienna+3D+(2)

...and more than easily upstages the horrifically bad **Step Up 3D** which you can read about at this link:

<http://www.fulvuedrive-in.com/review/10618/Legends+Of+The+Guardians:+The+O>

The great thing about the Chesney show is that it is not just a strong sampling of six locations of his hugely popular concert touring, but the man himself discusses his life, career, fans and the music extensively and thoroughly in one of the best such narratives by a music artist I have ever seen and heard in many video format. He has his act together, works hard, plays hard, is very talented and the only surprise is why he has not had a monster crossover hit. A definite successor to Garth Brooks, it is not just some back-to-basics approach he has, but he brings back Country to where it really belongs making so many of his contemporaries look dated, tired and even irrelevant, but I do not want to use his great work merely to bash so much I do not like that I hear and quickly forget.

That is because this is an artist totally in touch with his fans, what he is saying in his music and hits the nail on the head over and over again. Even non-Country and non-3D fans (the program is here in 2D) will be impressed by how good this is and I will not be surprised if other music artists do not

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 > Tangled (2010/Disney Blu-ray 3D + Blu-ray 2D w/DVD)
 > Doctor Who: Revenge Of The Cybermen (Story No. 79/BBC DVD)
 > Manson: My Name is Evil (2009/Lionsgate DVD)
 > Sherlock Holmes Double Feature (...In Washington + Faces Death/Rathbone/MPI DVD)
 > Have Gun – Will Travel: The Fifth Season, Volume Two (1962/CBS DVD)
 > The Last Unicorn (1982/Lionsgate Blu-ray w/DVD)

start imitating the approach of this work.

I then expected that Shana Feste's **Country Strong** (2010) might offer more of a new openness in the Country world, but it sadly represents the opposite regressive side of the world of that music as it stands. A terrible retread of **A Star Is Born** (all versions), Gwyneth Paltrow is a big Country star on drugs and alcohol that her husband (a very good acting performance by Tim McGraw, one of the few Country artists in real life making good music today) has pushed her into also serving as her manager. However, the film gives even more time to a new artist on the rise (Garrett Hedlund of **TRON: Legacy**) who cares about her and is also getting involved with a younger female singer (Leighton Meester) who was once a beauty queen and has insecurities of her own.

Unfortunately, the script is a predictable formulaic wreck, this is often unintentionally funny, the film is all over the place and ought to be called 'A Star Is Corrupted!' The actors are trying, but Miss Feste does not know how to deliver anything original and there are plenty of issues here. Among the most glaring is the odd tendency to give Mr. Hedlund better lighting than his female co-stars; something only a female director or cinematographer would do. The result is that he is the most well-lit cowboy since the co-stars of **Brokeback Mountain**. See this at your own risk.

Though it would seem that Country music would have nothing to do with Kylie Minogue, she has admitted that a one-time Country star was her #1 influence. That would be Olivia Newton-John, before she moved into Pop, Rock and Disco. That is among the revelations in the surprisingly rich compilation documentary **Kylie – Rare & Unseen**, which covers her career from child star singer to her triumph over the world music scene and the evils of breast cancer for which she is a survivor.

Like Chesney, she is the kind of great (and grateful) music star that used to make up the entire industry and for those who thought she was only about a couple of hit songs and a limited success, this program shows how insanely successful she is outside of the U.S. with Madonna/Lady Gaga sized record sales and sellout tours to match. There are also nice personal clips, rare clips and good editing that keep the hour-long program worth a good look.

The 1080p 1.78 X 1 MVC-encoded 3-D – Full Resolution digital High Definition image on the Blu-ray 3D version of **Chesney** is a little better than the 2D 1080p digital High Definition image on the same disc as the 2D has motion blur and flaws the 3D does not. In addition, it is more accurate than the awful Hanna Montana 3D disaster and at least as good as the forgettable Jonas Brothers 3D debacle as far as playback quality is concerned. Ultimately, this is more about depth than effects, yet that makes the concert seem more palpable and the hand is not overplayed in this respect. Also expect analog video and stills that are not 3D ready, but the editing is exceptional just the same.

The 1080p 2.35 X 1 digital High Definition image on **Strong** is 2D only and softer than I expected throughout, hardly looking better than **Chesney** and its slightly dark downstyling does not help either. Maybe they did not want this to look like a concert or documentary, but this approach did not work in its favor. That leaves the anamorphically enhanced 1.78 X 1 image on **Kylie**, which has plenty of once 1.33 X 1 analog NTSC and PAL video that is not the sharpest or clearest. The result is soft overall.

The DTS-HD MA (Master Audio) 5.1 mixes on the Blu-rays are evenly matched, with **Chesney** relying too much on .1 LFE top bring out the fullness of the concert experience and the surrounds not being the fullest, especially versus similar Blu-ray concert releases with the same kind of lossless sound. Then his narration is not going to be sonically wide-ranging, so that also cuts into the performance. **Strong** is dialogue-based, too much towards the center and front channels and its concert audio is also lacking. However, this ranges from smaller venues to a lack of ambition to record those parts with the best of fidelity. The Dolby Digital 2.0 on **Kylie** is a mix of mono and some stereo elements, but is flatter

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overall than expected.

Kylie has no extras, but both Blu-rays have extended/additional music performances. **Strong** adds the Original Ending (which makes no difference), Deleted Scenes (ditto) and Blu-ray exclusives like BD Live interactivity, movie IQ interactivity and three more featurettes: *Friends In High Places: The Cast Of Country Strong*, *Putting Words In Their Mouths: The Songwriters* and *A Little Bit Country: The Costumes*. Donnie & Marie never show up either.

- Nicholas Sheffo

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