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Exploring rare and unseen territory

This week's column kicks off with two recently viewed volumes of MVD's cool "Rare and Unseen" series, followed by a late-2010 chapter of their America's Music Legacy Series focusing on Dixieland Jazz. Next is a totally non-Genesis live DVD from Phil Collins before we wind up with a new CD from a quirky Austin group of multi-instrumentalists.

'Rare and Unseen,' Kylie Minogue (Wienerworld/MVDvisual, HHH)

This Oct. 19 DVD looks at Australian singer/actress/pop icon Kylie Minogue. Told through missing-believed-wiped archive interviews and other rare footage, this insightful DVD is a worthy addition to any Kylie collection. The collection includes lost and now restored TV interviews from the past and rare film of the singer talking about her career. Highlights include film from Kylie's TV acting days, child actor beginnings and the Aussie soap opera "Neighbors;" fairly entertaining movie clips and a question/answer session with an audience who attended one of her shows. This program is better-organized than the one below, though there's nothing from her popular techno period, other than one of three Madame Tussaud's lifestyle wax figures.

'Rare and Unseen,' David Bowie (Wienerworld/MVDvisual, HHH)

Most famous for his alter-ego, the androgynous "Ziggy Stardust," David Bowie has continually reinvented his music and image. His Top 10 hits in the U.S. & U.K. includes "China Girl," "Space Oddity," "Under Pressure" and more. The program here presents archive interviews that were originally thought lost plus rare/unseen footage. This Nov. 23 DVD is a worthy addition to any Bowie collection. This one isn't as highlight-filled as some "R&U" volumes, but my favorite parts include a somewhat-thorny interview with the BBC's Russell Harty, an "Earthling" era interview that's sprinkled throughout the program and tour rehearsal footage featuring Peter Frampton as the guitarist-for-hire. Bowie fans will enjoy this show.

'America's Music Legacy: Dixieland Jazz,' Various Artists (MVDvisual, HHHH)

This Dec. 7 DVD arrived later than the AML volumes previously reviewed. The series was recorded 1983-85 and produced by 20th Century Home Entertainment. Blues and ragtime, along with a rich local brass band tradition and other influences came together in the early 1900s in New Orleans to create a new music called Dixieland jazz, also known as traditional or New Orleans jazz. It spread north from New Orleans to Chicago, New York, Kansas City, and across the Midwest to California. This program is hosted by Al Hirt and features performances by Woody Herman, Irma Thomas and many more having a blast. My current favorites are Hirt's two small-combo songs, Irma Thomas' two songs (including "You Know What It Means" with Hirt) and fleet-fingered banjo picker Bob Plummer. Dixieland lovers will love this one, since it features lots of now-passed players having a good time.

'Going Back-Live At Roseland Ballroom, NYC' Phil Collins (Eagle Rock Entertainment, HHHH)

Though most folks know Phil Collins as the drummer/singer of Genesis' most successful period or as a solo artist, his roots in soul music are well-known among his contemporaries. That's what is on display in this Nov. 2 DVD/Blu-Ray filmed last June in New York. The 18-piece band features Funk Brothers guitarists Eddie Willis and Ray Monette, bassist Bob Babbitt, and two members of Genesis' live band, drummer Chester Thompson and guitarist Darryl Stuermer.

Folks like me who don't have all of these songs collected someplace else will really dig

this one. Highlights include Stevie Wonder's "Blame It On The Sun" plus old favorites like "Papa Was a Rollin' Stone," "Going to a Go Go," and "Ain't That Peculiar."

The title original song and great performances by band and backing vocalists make this one cool package.

'People Problems,' Oh No Oh My (Koenig Records, HHH1/2)

The Austin, Texas, foursome captured on this Jan. 11 CD describes their music as "sexy indie."

Daniel Hoxmeier, Joel Calvin, Greg Barkley and Time Regan are the multi-instrumentalists who comprise Oh No Oh My. Their music isn't all that sexy to this listener, but it's individualistic, and they seem to have had a hard time with motor vehicles while recording this album . . . just look at the cover. Highlights include the power-poppy "You Were Right" and the multi-layered "Brains."

I don't really get it, but some readers might.

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