

The Sun Herald

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New music, collections and combinations

Veni vidi videos

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This week, I'm presenting an all-video column made up of releases that arrived late last year or since the beginning of January. The first one was on ABC television around 1971 and contains some charming Harry Nilsson original songs. The second two present different British bands from the first wave of English punk rock. The final offering presents master guitarist Michael Schenker leading his troops through a live rendition of his late-2011 "Temple Of Rock" album.

'The Point: The Definitive Collector's Edition,' Harry Nilsson (MVDvisual, HHHH 1/2)

This nifty, Maurice Sendak-meets-Yellow Submarine-style animated movie was produced by Academy Award winner Fred Wolf and narrated by Ringo Starr who is onscreen as a father reading the story to his son. The DVD contains bonus features on Harry Nilsson, the winsome songwriter who came up with the original fable, and the making, pitching and conceptualization of the movie.

This presentation was released in late November 2012. Things in the movie seem dated at times, since it was produced in 1971 but folks who remember the TV airing from long ago and/or the charming song "Me and My Arrow" (which is joined by other tunes here) will really enjoy this "pointed" but childlike film.

'Live Live Live in London 2002: Tiki Nightmare,' The Damned (MVDvisual, HHH)

These two DVD concerts were released Dec. 11 and present new millennium shows by two English

punk/post-punk bands. The Damned is still fronted by Dracula-looking vocalist Dave Vanian and original guitarist Captain Sensible, with the new line-up rounded out by Vampirella-esque bassist Patricia Morrison, keyboardist Monty Oxy Moron and drummer Pinch (who plays a couple songs in a gorilla suit).

I'm not really familiar with many vintage Damned tunes, so my favorites from this tropical show will differ from those beloved by old-school fans. They include the powerful opener "Street of Dreams," the pile-driving "Wait for the Blackout," the sarcastic "Would You Be So Hot," the snotty "Disco Man," the vintage "Neat Neat Neat," and Sensible's version of "Happy Talk," which was a UK hit. Fans of this band will probably enjoy this concert and the nifty bonus interviews.

'On Stage On Screen,' The Stranglers (MVDvisual, HHHH)

The Stranglers' music back in the day was highlighted by Doors-sounding keyboards, prodigious instrumental abilities and low-end vocals.

The sets here were both recorded Dec. 2, 2005, at The Shepherd's Bush Empire with original drummer Jet Black, bassist/vocalist Jean Jacques Burnel, keyboardist/vocalist Dave Greenfield, newer guitarist/vocalist Baz Warne and since-departed lead singer Paul Roberts. Electric set highlights include "Skin Deep," "Always the Sun," "Lost Control," a psychedelic cover of "Walk on By," a spaghetti-western-flavored "Time to Die" and the classic "No More Heroes."

Burnel and Warne use acoustic instruments, and Greenfield picks up a box guitar on one song but things are still drum and keyboard-driven on the acoustic set for the most part. My favorite song is the moody "Tucker's Grave."

Stranglers fans will enjoy this DVD, which includes a short dramatic film starring Burnel.

'Temple Of Rock,' Michael Schenker (MVDvisual, HHHH)

This presentation, available on DVD and CD, was released Jan. 29. It presents a May 12 concert from the Netherlands. This release distinguishes itself from previously reviewed concert releases due to the band line-up: Michael Schenker (lead guitar), Doogie White (vocals), Herman Rarebell (drums), Francis Buchholz (bass) and Wayne Findley (rhythm guitar, keyboards).

In other words, at least some of the personnel from the late-2011 TOR all-star album are onboard.

It also includes bonus tracks from the 2011 High Voltage Festival with guest appearances from Schenker's brother Rudolf (The Scorpions), ex-Journey singer Jeff Scott Soto, and UFO bassist Pete Way.

Highlights include the opening TOR instrumentals "Into The Arena;" UFO classics "Lights Out," "Rock Bottom," "Doctor Doctor" and "Shoot Shoot," the Scorpions favorite "Rock You Like a Hurricane" and the TOR rocker "Before the Devil Knows You're Dead."

Fans of melodic classic heavy metal will enjoy this show.

Upcoming columns

During the next few weeks, I'll be reviewing DVD documentaries about Pink and Paul Williams plus new CDs by Jason Marsalis Vibes Quartet, The Riverbreaks, Red Jacket Mine, Scott Ramminger, Samantha Crain and Phil Lee.

Have a great Mardi Gras week.

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Leftovers from 2012 plus a new audio/visual package