

'83 US Festival: Days 1-3

★★

MVD Visual MVD59460

Short-lived shindig in the West Coast wilderness

The US Festival, on the outskirts of San Bernardino, California, was the brainchild of Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak, with the intention of throwing "one big party in the middle of nowhere", according to the quote on the front of this DVD box. The party came at a huge price, however, losing \$12 million each of the two years it was staged, before Wozniak decided that concert promoting wasn't for him.

Very brief highlights of the second year's three-day bash, divided into themed bills, feature on this disc. Kicking off with New Wave Day, the curious line-up finds opening act, Australia's so-so popsters Divinyls, followed by yet-to-be-superstars INXS and The Beat, the Midlands ska-rockers playing one of their last shows. The Clash, meanwhile, are on jaded autopilot for *Should I Stay Or Should I Go*.

Heavy metal reigns on Day Two, with Judas Priest whipping the 67,000 crowd into a frenzy, before Triumph and Scorpions trudge through their lifeless numbers. Triumph get

a second chance 24 hours later, on Rock Day, but are eclipsed by a fiery U2 and a majestic Stevie Nicks. Presumably, obstacles securing rights to the other acts accounts for the absence of several big names (David Bowie, Ozzy Osborne), resulting in an incomplete record of one computer geek's magnificent folly. *Terry Staunton*

Black Lips

Kids Like You And Me

★★★★★

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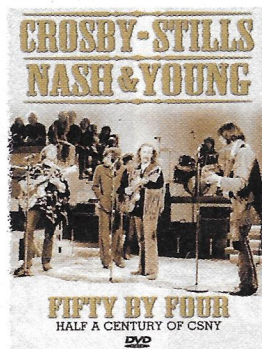
Middle Eastern promise

When Black Lips toured pretty much all the "go-to" cities of the Middle East in 2012, such locales were, if mainstream media then was to be believed, more anti-American than ever. The tour had initially been slated for 2011, but had been rescheduled as a result of security concerns following the beginnings of the Arab Spring.

That said, in this film, every person the band encounters, either at gigs, in bazaars or at numerous media hook-ups, seems thrilled to have the Atlantan garage four-piece in their respective countries. There's a danger this could be viewed as patronising – but, as the band rightly state in the opening scenes, they "wouldn't go half way round the world to be ironic". The motives never seem anything but genuine.

You get occasional footage of the group (and relatively local Lebanon support act Lazy Lung) playing to mixed-age crowds, intercut with steamy shots of markets, the inevitable view of the pyramids, war-torn hotels and kebabs. But when bandmembers are caught off-guard, marvelling at their environment, they appear thoughtful, considerate and even pioneering – again

contradicting what the mainstream (music) press would have us believe. An admirable, heartfelt effort. *Jake Kennedy*



Fifty By Four: Half A Century Of CSNY

Crosby, Stills Nash & Young

★★★★★

Pride DVDPGDVD 168

Déjà vu on a four-way street

While this nigh-on three-hour documentary is completely unofficial, it still does a sterling job. True, some of the material is recycled – the individual protagonists' interviews for sure, the archive clips for certain – but there are enough examples of talking heads actually moving the narrative along and plenty of five-cents' worth items from the likes of Dallas Taylor, Greg Reeves and producer Bill Halverson, who can be viewed as CSN&Y's very own George Martin for input and diplomacy.

The story arcs back in time to the Sunset Strip, The Byrds, Buffalo Springfield and the arrival of a good-looking Mancunian candidate who became their game-changer. While the tale is familiar, the sumptuous travelogue footage puts one in the mood for some Californian down time. The main thrust of the story is

the four men's refusal to act as team players, with Young especially deserving of his "Shakey" ID, but that's what made them sound so good. Harmony versus tension is an intriguing prospect and if the filmmakers are reusing old sources, at least they don't go to landfill. *Max Bell*

Wilko Johnson

Live At Koko

★★★★★

Cadiz CADIZDVD 127

A fond farewell, before a welcome return

Shortly after tickets for this show – at the cavernous Camden Town club last March – went on sale, Johnson announced that he'd been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, and that the gig, the second of two at the venue, was likely to be his last. Happily, he's still treading the boards in 2014, but that doesn't diminish the tangible emotional weight of this DVD.

Shots of the audience reveal more than a few punters wiping away a tear, but Wilko (never one for sentimentality) is a shining beacon of business-as-usual, Fender round his neck, blazing through the R&B that's been his bread-and-butter for 40 years. He's aided by the exemplary rhythm section of bassist Norman Watt-Roy and Dylan Howe, completing arguably the most potent power trio on the planet.

Thoughts of his imminent but thankfully delayed retirement surface during the grubby chug of *Going Back Home*, there's an added frenzy to Dr Feelgood favourites *Roxette* and *She Does It Right*, and a riotous cameo from Alison Moyet on *All Through The City*. Johnson is perhaps the only musician who can get away with playing a hoary old chestnut such as Johnny B Goode so far into the 21st Century, but we'll forgive him anything, just as long as he promises to stay with us a little longer. *Terry Staunton*

Julian Lennon

Through The Picture Window

★

Music From Another Room

MFAR 4 DVD

Pane in the ass

Through The Picture Window fancies itself as a revealing portrait of Julian Lennon as an artist. Really, it's an overblown extended promo video.

It focuses on the songs that make up Lennon's sixth studio album, *Everything*

Changes, with contributions from Lennon himself, his band and co-writers. Most mystifying is the Grand Canyon-sized gap between the regard in which Lennon and his army of cronies hold this material and the quality of the music itself. Every time a song is dissected it comes with a quasi-humble explanation of how it magically came together thanks to Lennon's innate gifts, with talking heads uniformly in awe of the man. Then the song plays and it's some horrible sub-Rutles bluster. It's baffling.

It wouldn't be a mediocre music documentary without Bono rearing his grizzled chops; there he is, blankly pontificating about Lennon's way with words. Some fun is anticipated when Stephen Tyler pops up, but even that turns into an unjustified love-in. Tyler and Lennon prattle smugly about the ease with which they and two co-writers banged out a tune in a few hours, giving the summit the significance of the meeting of the Million Dollar Quartet. Obviously, the song is new-age tripe of the highest order, as is this documentary. A waste of time. *Jamie Atkins*

Meredith Monk

Solo Concert 1980

★★★★★

Tzadik TZ 3014

Extended voice techniques, live in Long Island

Morse-coded, dot-dash despatches receive punctuation tutorials from controlled clusters of menagerie chatter. Downtown Kate Bush gives a phalanx of felines the third degree. Unknowable half words dissolve into... Movements mirror muttered morsels.

Monk tapped into something enticingly primal during this solo concert, presented for the benefit of an intimate crowd at the Inter-Media Art Center in Huntington. She draws out the same animistic spirits that protected the Native American tribes, that showed Robbie Basho the way home to his imagined East.

Whether performing frenetic a cappella during selections from *Songs From The Hill*, or accompanying herself on piano for pieces taken from *Dolmen Music* (the troubled innocence of *The Tale* is particularly affecting), Monk's ability to alternate seamlessly between, say, Tuvan-style throat singing and trilling ululations, enable her to assign a voice to emotions when mere words and language just simply aren't enough. *Spencer Grady*

Singing the body eclectic: Meredith Monk

