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Donovan

The Donovan Concert - Live In LA (Raven/MVD Visual)

This DVD supplies a decent overview of Donovan's key '60s songs as performed at a January 2007 concert. The songs work nicely in stripped-down acoustic-guitar renditions with minimal backing percussion. The show was held as a benefit for the David Lynch Foundation for Consciousness-Based Education and World Peace, and the presence of emcee Lynch brings some fun pop-culture surrealism to the DVD. A guest appearance of Beach Boy Mike Love joining in on "Mellow Yellow" provides additional pop novelty.

Unfortunately, the DVD suffers noticeably from the sort of stuffy, saccharine institutionalism which plagues PBS reunion concerts - i.e., TV specials of the sort satirized in *A Mighty Wind*. Furthermore, Donovan's monumentally corny demeanor can be a bit tough to stomach in high doses. However, Donovan is gushingly genuine as an archetypal head-in-the-clouds flower-child idealist. His sincerity and authenticity make the heavy corn syrup a bit easier to swallow.

With a talky hour main feature and four so-so bonus outtake songs from the performance, the DVD comes off a bit short. Considering this is the only Donovan music DVD on the market, it's a bit of a letdown that the vintage TV appearances excerpted in Lynch's introduction aren't viewable in their entirety as bonus features. Although the DVD is less than fully satisfying overall, these songs are proven classics, his voice still sounds great, and it's more of a visual document of live Donovan than his fans have gotten thus far.

- *Michael David Toth*