



DVD REVIEW

Donovan

The Donovan Concert Live in L.A.

MVD Visual (MVDV4592)

Grade: ★★★★★

Who would have imagined back in the mid-'60s that Donovan — the starry-eyed minstrel, a harbinger of hippiedom — would still be entertaining the faithful 40 years on. The harsh realities of the new millennium notwithstanding, Donovan remains forever affixed to that era of innocence and eternal adolescence, sentiments still echoed in his puckish pop refrains.

So here he is, as deft as ever and looking like he's scarcely aged a day... well, okay, a decade. Introduced by filmmaker David Lynch, "The Donovan Concert Live in L.A." finds him performing a benefit in support of Lynch's Foundation for Consciousness-Based Education and World Peace, a transcendental meditation initiative to which Donovan famously subscribes. With nimble, low-key

backing by stand-up bassist Tom Mansi and percussionist Stewart Lawrence, he's still the wavy-haired, quiver-voiced piper, offering up a well-tended roll call of greatest hits (sans "Atlantis" and "Cosmic Wheels," unfortunately) and poetic reflections.

There are a few surprises: an original tune called "Dream" from Don's daughter Astrella Celeste, a somewhat staid guest appearance by Beach Boy and fellow TM buddy Mike Love on "Mellow Yellow," a poignant half-spoken read of "Lalena" (inspired, as he reveals, by actress Lotte Lenya), and a new song titled "The Illusion," which, appropriately, he delivers seated guru-style before a starry backdrop. The emotional high point of the show has Donovan introducing the long-lost, George Harrison-penned verse to "Hurdy Gurdy Man," apparently written in tandem during that famous trek to India when Donovan and The Beatles huddled with the Maharishi.

Inevitably, witnessing Donovan in live mode feels more about reconnection than revelation. It's comforting, indeed, that four decades on, he comes across as amiable as ever. www.MVDvisual.com

— Lee Zimmerman

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