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They call him mellow yellow, quite rightly.



Written by James Reddick

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On their campaign for World Peace through transcendental meditation, David Lynch, wacked-out director of "Twin Peaks," "Eraserhead" and "Mulholland Drive," and Donovan, wacked-out '60s pop singer, have released a DVD of a January 2007 concert performed in Los Angeles, called "Live in L.A." The result is, for lack of a better word, pretty wacky. It's mostly straight-forward stuff, with Donovan standing in place, strumming away on his acoustic guitar and singing his hits. From "Catch the Wind" to "Mellow Yellow" to "Sunshine Superman," they're all there, with no frills attached.

While the songs are for the most part enjoyable, it's not the music that sustains the hour-long video, but everything else. For one, there's something wrong with the crowd. As Donovan strums away dully, they're all smiling wildly, holding each other, and teetering on the edge of climax. I'm pretty sure that they're actually a crowd cut from an old Gallagher show.

Secondly, and most entertaining, are Donovan's interludes. He speaks so slowly, and with such bizarre Scottish inflection, that the weight of every word is magnified infinitely. I think that this is how people confuse him for a prophet. When he says "And now we wind down... to the end... of our show... the show that everyone knows... is... the inner world," you're so lulled by the relaxing gait of his words that you don't even notice that it's complete gibberish. I wasn't even aware that an inner world existed.

But, in my mind, this is the best thing about Donovan. He's not, as Lynch introduced him, a "great poet," nor, as he believes, is he the messiah (he's creating the Invincible Donovan College for "total knowledge," "national invincibility" AND "world peace"), but he is endlessly entertaining in all of his self-importance. He sings fun songs about smoking banana peels to get high, wears funny clothes, and reminds us of a time when you could be famous simply for being a catchy crackpot. For that, we all owe him. So, thank you Donovan.

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