

## This Is Spinal Tap: 25th Anniversary Edition

★★★★★

OPTIMUM

**Five-star classic cramped by lacklustre extras.**

Twenty-five years after Christopher Guest, Michael McKean and Harry Shearer unleashed their hapless alter-egos on an unsuspecting '80s rock scene, *This Is Spinal Tap* remains the ultimate rockumentary. In recent years the likes of *Some Kind Of Monster* and *Anvil!* have made the trio's peerless on-the-road satire appear even more pertinent, but, with a special edition DVD already available, what makes this new package worth the price tag? Well, not a great deal. All the best extras from the first 'Special Edition' release (band commentary, music videos, movie outtakes, trailers) are repeated here, alongside a clutch of other Tap goodies, the misfiring Live Earth gig and their 1994 Royal Albert Hall show among them. Elsewhere, featurettes chart the making of the band's new LP and a retrospective documentary led by celebrity fans makes this a completists-only collection. The original film's glorious 82 minutes still stand tall above all else.

Ross Bennett

## The Doors

★★

### From The Outside

CHROME DREAMS

**New unauthorised 140-minute documentary.**

"The rarest footage of the band in existence," boast the liner notes. "Classic live and studio performances." It fails to mention that there's just a few seconds of music and/or visuals before they're talked over by one of the rambling talking heads – music journalists and authors often – who make up most of the documentary. The rest is dominated by a bloodless narration that makes it sound more like an old BBC information film than the

story of a remarkable band. The only things this Doors fan found interesting were the dark footage of what looks like a video for *Unknown Soldier*, an old American TV interview with Morrison, and a new interview with his articulate widow Patricia, recalling Jim's reaction to the Miami indecency case and revealing his fondness for Frank Sinatra and Perry Como. Better to wait for the DVD of Tom DiCillo's new doc *When You're Strange*.

Sylvie Simmons

## Fillmore: The Last Days

★★★★★

RHINO

**Hippies partied; legendary promoter grumbled.**



For most, the key reason to see this long-out-of-print doc chronicling the final week of concerts at San Francisco's Fillmore West in 1971 has always been the sizzling live footage: Santana, Grateful Dead, Hot Tuna, Quicksilver Messenger Service etc, all still flying high. But the star is Bill Graham, the tireless, volatile promoter who created and ran the countercultural landmark. Having escaped the Nazis before carving out his own version of the American dream, Graham was no flower child. Though he honestly loved their music, he called out the hippies: "Utopia never came, the streets were never full of flowers. This created a negativism, a defeatism," he says in this '72 film. "The

flowers wilted, the scene changed." That change prompted Graham to shutter the venue (along with its New York sister, Fillmore East), and though he would return to produce shows until his 1991 death, this "farewell" party marked the end of a chapter.

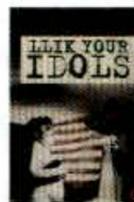
Jeff Tamarkin

## Lik Your Idols: The Chaotic Story Of Transgressive Cinema

★★★★

MVD

**A trawl through NYC's ugly underground film scene, integral to the evolution of Sonic Youth.**



The image of the scowling Lung Leg on the cover of Sonic Youth's 1986 *Evol* was a still from Richard Kern's NYC underground film *Submit To Me*. Along with Nick Zedd, Kern was a prime mover in the celluloid equivalent of the uncompromising no wave scene, dubbed *The Cinema Of Transgression*, and the subject of *Lik Your Idols* – a reference to SY's *Kill Yr Idols*. Lydia Lunch, Henry Rollins, Jim Thirwell, members of Sonic Youth and Swans appeared in these Z-grade documents of (fake) blood, drug use, filth, sex and violence. Inevitably, the genitalia displayed are women's and most of those degraded are female. Still a sleazebag, Kern says his shift to photography "is a total

voyeuristic thing." This compelling, but unfocused, documentary also features the more measured input of Bruce LaBruce, while Richard Hell, Swans' Jarboe, Lydia Lunch and Sonic Youth's Thurston Moore distance themselves from the parade of grime. "I always felt separate from these people," says Moore.

Kieron Tyler

## The Fall

★★★★★

### Last Night At The Palais

SANCTUARY/UNIVERSAL

**Conductor Smith and his latest gang live in Hammersmith, 2007.**

A west London entertainment fixture since 1919, the Hammersmith Palais closed in April 2007 to make way for – well done, council planning committee – offices and a restaurant. As if in answer to this philistine affront to taste and judgement, the last group to play there was The Fall. A professionally filmed affair with suitably minimal presentation, this 12-track hour features an Anglo-American two bass/two guitar line-up that plays their avant-garde hard and mean. There's disdain, queasy energy and grit a-plenty in songs from *Fall Heads Roll* and *Reformation Post-TLC*, plus *Wrong Place*, *Right Time* from 1988 and a sideways cover of Frank Zappa's *Hungry Freaks, Daddy*. Early on, it's probably not the kind of thing to make new converts – Fall autocrat Mark E. Smith only appears at the end of opening harangue *Senior Twilight Stock Replacer* – but the latter-day riff-classics

Blindness and a truncated Reformation are crushingly powerful.

Ian Harrison

## Deep Purple

★★★★★

### History, Hits & Highlights '68-'76

EAGLE VISION

**Four hours of peak-era Purple.**



The glory and excess of Deep Purple's mid-'70s pomp is defined here by a performance of *Mistreated*, their thundering blues marathon, at the California Jam festival in 1974. After bassist/vocalist Glenn Hughes has paused while introducing the song to take a sharp, tell-tale sniff, guitarist Ritchie Blackmore stands expressionless before the 200,000-strong audience and wrings his Fender Stratocaster as if it were Jimmy Page's neck. It's one of many spectacular moments on a two-disc set tracing Purple's evolution from '60s groovers to '70s heavy rock giants. Culled from various television shows and gigs, it features almost every key Purple track, from *Hush* to the unbeatable *Burn*. Laughs are provided by a 1969 appearance on *Playboy TV*, where Blackmore teaches pipe-smoking host Hugh Hefner to play a chord. Two documentaries offer insight into the ego battles that prompted Blackmore's exit in 1975. As drummer Ian Paice concluded, "Ritchie's a weird dude."

Paul Elliott



Spinal Tap: none more special!