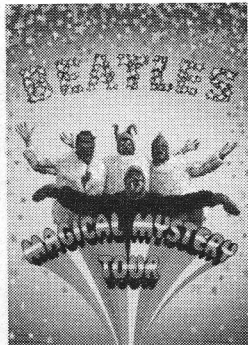


# DVD REVIEWS

## THE BEATLES: Magical Mystery Tour (Apple)

Roll up! Roll up for the return to the market of the hour-long 1967 British TV film *Magical Mystery Tour*. Those of you who care already know the film and the story behind it, so I'll skip the history lesson and jump straight to what makes this new edition unique.

Previous video releases seemed have been made off prints dug out of dumpsters. This time around, Apple comes through with a beautiful first-generation image, exploding with vibrant colors and with everything sharper and more detailed than ever. On top of the visuals lays a crystal clear, freshly remixed stereo soundtrack (though some may gripe that the songs don't match the unique mixes heard in the original film.) Whether you love this film or agree with the British press that trashed it—I've always given it a B, finding it hit-and-miss—you'll have to agree it never looked or sounded better.



Apple offers a healthy heaping of unused footage by way of a short "making of" feature, including recollections from some cast members, including Paul and Ringo, and new edits of the song sequences. One great bonus is an independently made clip for Traffic's "Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush," originally slated for inclusion. American fans can appreciate a feature that gives a background on some of the British notables in the cast such as Ivor Cutler, Jessie Robbins and Nat Jackley. Easter eggs include a luncheon scene and Aunt Jessie singing on the bus, neither of which you're likely to watch more than once.

On the bizarrely amusing side is *Top of the Pops'* promo clip for "Hello Goodbye," which features four young folks doing stop-motion Beatle-ish things in the snow, intercut with footage of the Beatles in the editing room.

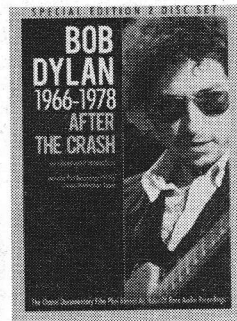
One letdown is Paul's film-length commentary. He not only sounds half-asleep but adds surprisingly few tidbits of value, though he does shed some interesting new light on who actually wore the Walrus costume.

Thank you, Apple, for giving something to Beatles fans other than just another repackage of recordings we already own in umpteenthlicate. Now howabout the Shea Stadium film? (Michael Lynch)

## BOB DYLAN: 1966-1978 After the Crash (Pride)

There is wisdom in the old Socratic saying that the "unexamined life is not worth living." But there is also something true about a remark the chronically depressed protagonist in *Chilly Scenes of Winter* delivers concerning his perpetually happy younger sister: "She must know something I don't."

What we know and don't know about a particular life is the subject of *Bob Dylan: 1966-1978 After the Crash*, which puts the songster and his career under the microscope. Like similar releases, it carries a disclaimer: "This DVD is not authorized by Bob Dylan, his managers, Columbia Records or any other companies associated with the release, publishing or ownership of Bob Dylan's music." The two-disc set (one a CD) does claim a connection to *Isis*, the Dylan fanzine, and mixes "rare historical footage [not much] with review and criticism from experts, friends, fellow musicians who played with Bob, and even the odd enemy...covering the period 1966-1978."



The "odd enemy" is AJ Weberman, the stalker who harassed Dylan and foraged through his garbage cans in the early 1970s. The CD, added to the previously released DVD, is comprised of the hectoring phone calls Weberman made to Dylan. Listening to them, it's a wonder that Bob even tried to convince him to go away and didn't just walk around the corner to the Mafia hangout on Houston Street, where guys with names like Louie and Fat Tony were available to sort out an "odd enemy." The one time I saw Weberman in action, I was at the bagel-burger place below Dylan's apartment at Bleeker & MacDougal and Weberman was on the street bawling-screaming through a megaphone. After 30 minutes, I was ready to take out a hit.

Weberman aside, the other talking heads on the DVD have useful insights into Dylan's life during the 12-year period covered. Clinton Heylin, who wrote the biographical *Dylan: Behind the Shades* as well as two lengthy song-by-song studies covering more than 600 Dylan tunes, provides great commentary, as does Nigel Williamson of *Uncut*, Patrick Humphries (*NME*, *Mojo*) and *Isis* founder-publisher Derek Barker. Also on camera is Dylan collaborator Jacques Levy, in what is said to be his last interview, talking about Dylan's work methods, as well as musicians Bruce Langhorne, Eric Weissberg, Rob Cornelius, Rob Stoner and Scarlet Riviera who tell us about what it's like performing with the man.

Fans who want more background on Dylan's Woodstock days, his return to the Village, the Isle of Wight show and the Rolling Thunder Revue will find useful information on *After the Crash*. But examining his life in such absolute, exhausting detail maybe is not necessary. After all, all that's really needed can be found in the man's music. (Bill Wasserzieher)

## HEAVY METAL KIDS – Ultimate Kid Capers

As enjoyable as some of the Heavy Metal Kids records are (see my review of *Kitsch* last issue), they're missing the element of visual showmanship that was such a huge part of the Kids' appeal. *Ultimate Kid Capers*, therefore, is a veritable godsend for Kids fans, gathering together all the known TV appearances of the group in their 1974-78 heyday,

along with some tasty bonus features.

The main program opens with the band's 1974 appearance on BBC2's *Old Grey Whistle Test*, looking like overgrown Dickens street urchins as they perform two of the best songs from their debut album, "Hangin' On" and "It's the Same." Singer Gary Holton is the visual focal point (as he is throughout this DVD), mugging for the camera like some kind of demented, bow-legged chimney sweep.

Next up is a controversial appearance on the TV news documentary show *Panorama*. This particular episode concerned itself with the escalating juvenile crime rate in British cities at the time, and the Kids and their "violent, anti-authoritarian music" are exposed as a reflection of this phenomenon. While the music of the 1960s had been all about flowers and beads, explains Holton, the new music of the Kids concerned itself with matter of "boots, bover and booze." To illustrate this point, the band is shown—in edited excerpts—performing their song "The Cops Are Coming" to a club full of enthusiastic and no doubt impressionable young people. A few years later, this kind of loud anti-authoritarian rock'n'roll would be all the rage, but the Kids had lousy timing—this was 1974 not 1977. After the TV show aired, the band found itself banned from half the venues in the country (a situation that also sounds familiar).

The band's second album, *Anvil Chorus*, was released in 1975, and this period is represented by a short set filmed in Paris for the TV show *Jukebox*. There are storming versions of "The Turk" (sounding much heavier than on the LP), "Crisis" and "The Cops Are Coming" from the new album, plus the first LP ballad, "It's the Same." Holton's theatrical inclinations are well to the fore, especially during the middle section of "The Cops Are Coming" with its once-heard-never-forgotten punchline "His head fell off!"

Next they are shown performing their almost-hit



Gary Holton, ca. 1977.