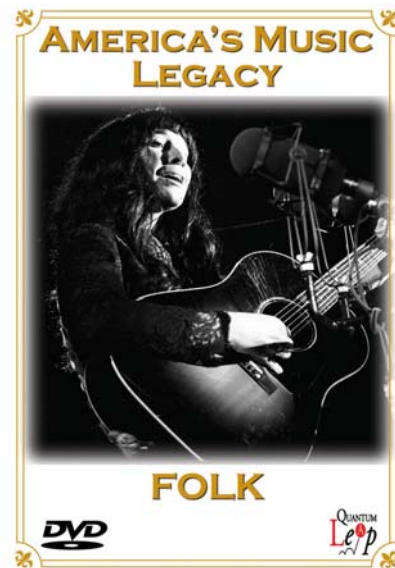


DVD Review: *America's Music Legacy - Blues, Soul, Folk*

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You don't sing "goddamned" onstage in Monroe, Louisiana. At least you couldn't in 1969. Steppenwolf was less than one-third the way through their cover of Hoyt Axton's "The Pusher" in their concert when the city fathers pulled the plug, cut their power and ended the concert. This writer was in the audience. Axton is actually one of over a dozen artists whose work is the focus of the "Folk" volume of Quantum Leap's series of DVD's, *America's Music Legacy*. Known more as a folk singer, Axton (whose mother wrote "[Heartbreak Hotel](#)") also wrote "Joy to the World" (a hit for Three Dog Night) and "Greenback Dollar" (The Kingston Trio).



In addition to the "Folk", "Soul", "Blues" and "Dixieland Jazz" will also be released on Pearl Harbor Day, 2010. Our review material did not include the "Dixieland" DVD and the notes make it sound very interesting with Al Hirt as host. Joining the late trumpeter are the likes of Woody Herman, Della Reese, Scatman Crothers and Irma Thomas among others.

Most of the acts on each DVD were filmed in one or two main venues with a noteworthy host moderating the highly edited program. Theodore Bikel did the honors on the "Folk" disc which was my choice of the three in terms of editing, direction, camera work and sound editing.

Buffy Saint Marie gave a brief commentary based on her Native American heritage about pow wows and the importance of the story-telling therein. She then delivered a memorable performance of "Starwalker". The New Christy Minstrels, sans black-face, performed a tribute to [Stephen F. Foster](#) with a harmonious medley of his more well known songs. Their a cappella cover of "My Old Kentucky Home" stands out as a show-stopper although it sounded creepily like "Tomorrow Belongs to Me!"

Detroit DJ, Leon Isaac Kennedy, aka "Leon the Lover" was host of the "Soul" volume and brought out as the first act none other than James Brown. The Godfather of Soul and his onstage entourage and band showed why he earned the title of "The Hardest Working Man in Show Business." Unfortunately for Ben E. King, he had to follow Brown et al after a scorching eleven minute version of "Rap Payback - Jam". Curiously, Brown's

performance was edited and he appears again later in the show. Gladys Knight and the Pips were on hand and it would have been great to see the Pips in a dance-off with JB's horn section!

The highlights of the "Blues" disc were B.B. King performing his signature "How Blue Can You Get," and [Buddy Guy](#) with Jr. Wells doing "Who's Loving You Tonight?"

The track listings on the package are out of synch with the DVD's, artist's names were wrong in a few cases and the sound track featured dragging tape. Rarely did the big name artists perform their "signature songs" as did King. In a production of this nature, why wouldn't Percy Sledge sing "When a Man Loves a Woman?"

If the [America's Music Legacy](#) series becomes available via streaming it would be a better value than buying the set.

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