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YOUR LIFE

Thursday, Oct. 14, 2010

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Music Legacy DVDs from MVD, more



This week's Sound Check kicks off with the first four volumes of an early 1980s series spotlighting different types of American music followed by a new CD from a Memphis band and Ronnie Wood's first solo album in a long time.

'America's Music Legacy: Country and Western,' (Quantum Leap/MVDvisual, HHHH)

The America's Music Legacy series was recorded in 1983-1985 and produced by 20th Century Home Entertainment. It showcases "musical legends" performing songs that continue to attract and entice folks to this day. This first set of DVD titles comes out Oct. 19.



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The "Country and Western" disc presents few legends, but there are performances from Jerry Lee Lewis, Doug Kershaw, Patti Page and Ricky Skaggs along with other folks. The highlight is Jerry Lee's performance, which isn't very country-fied but is an excellent example of how The Killer can take things over. His short set ("Rockin' My Life Away," "You Win Again," "Great Balls of Fire," "You Belong to Me," "Whole Lotta Shakin'" and more) shows why he's one of the best at blending country, rock 'n' roll and more. Incorrect song titles and misspelled artist's names are my only complaint.

'America's Music Legacy: Gospel,' (Quantum Leap/MVDvisual, HHH)

This volume is hosted by Levar Burton and features archival film of Mahalia Jackson and live performances from composer/performer Andrae Crouch, The Winans and more, mostly leaning toward the soul-R&B flavored branch of gospel music rather than the modern rock version favored by some of today's big sellers. The Archers version seems to combine 1980s AM-radio rock with Christian themes.

The Mahalia footage is the highlight, especially "When the Saints Go Marching In," though the clip is repeated twice. Linda Hopkins' two songs are the best of the rest.

'America's Music Legacy: Rock 'n' Roll,' (Quantum Leap/MVDvisual, HHH1/2)

The rock 'n' roll volume was filmed in Baton Rouge and is hosted by Fabian, who sings an almost-execrable version of Bob Seger's "Old Time Rock and Roll" before turning the stage over to the Coasters. They blaze through "Charlie Brown," "Yakety Yak" and lots of audience participation.

Lou Christie hams it up a lot, but his "Lightning Strikes" is a guilty pleasure. Other highlights include The Crystals short set. Little Anthony's songs and Bo Diddley's first tune.

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