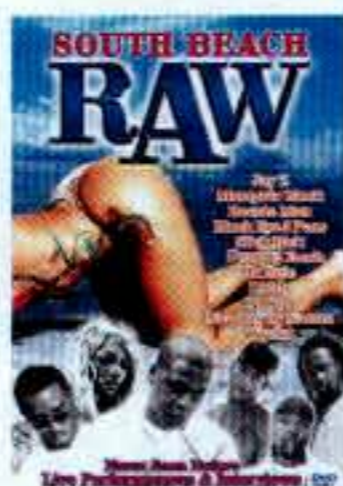




Before their rougher edges were smoothed out on 1979's *Parallel Lines*, new wave pioneers Blondie combined punk attitude with '50s girl group pop polish on **BLONDIE: LIVE 1978** (Eagle Rock Entertainment). This show sees the original sextet (except for Gary Valentine, here replaced by new bassist Nigel Harrison) perform a tight, 11-song set for Germany's then-popular TV show *Musikladen*. Among the key tracks are the band's first single, 'X-Offender', and the gorgeous ballad 'In The Flesh', as well as more obscure songs like 'I'm On E' and 'Kidnapper'. Singer Deborah Harry looks particularly fetching and is in fine voice, displaying the defiant sexuality and tongue-in-cheek attitude that would make her a star in a year's time. At just 30 minutes and with no extras, *Live 1978* is more of an item for Blondie completists than casual fans, but it's also a valuable historical artifact of an influential band on the verge of international success. *SP*

Don't look to **SOUTH BEACH RAW** for any meaningful (or even interesting) insights into what makes Miami a celebrity magnet. This poorly-shot, atrociously edited, magazine-style vid combines superficial "interviews" (more like sound bites) with the likes of Diddy and Lil Kim with music videos (Twista, Mobb Deep, The Game) and live performances. The live stuff, shot during an outdoor festival years ago (it isn't identified), is especially unwatchable, with the camera often panning all over the place in search of on-stage action. The novelty of seeing pre-Fergie Black Eyed Peas perform and Wyclef on stage with a very young Usher is outweighed by the production's sheer incompetence. (The audio during the Slick Rick/Doug E. Fresh duet on Rick's classic 'La-Di-Da-Di' is especially garbled.) A small saving grace is the closing club set by Jay-Z. We see Hova messing up his lyrics at one point, and watching Ja Rule wander around the stage with nothing to do until he spits his verse on 'Can I Get A' is mildly amusing. *SP*



COACHELLA, on the other hand, is a slick doc that acts as a convincing ad for the six-year-old, Indio, California-based annual music festival. Well-shot performance clips (including The Flaming Lips, The Pixies, Radiohead and Iggy & The Stooges) are mixed with funny fan moments and okay artist interviews. The result is a portrait of a festival which, as Red Hot Chili Peppers bassist Flea points out, has never kowtowed to corporate sponsors or been plagued by mindless violence. A second disc includes poster/photo galleries and extra artist interviews. Most of these are blah, but the backstage stuff with the Dresden Dolls and The Libertines (featuring a pre-junkie Pete Doherty) are fun. *SP*

As a document of a band falling apart, **REFUSED ARE F**KING DEAD** is very insightful. And it should be given that its director, Kristofer Steen, also happened to be the now-defunct Swedish punk band's bassist. Steen gathers together his former bandmates — singer Dennis Lyxzén, drummer David Sandström and guitarist Jon Brännström — to discuss the unravelling of one of punk's most exciting and ambitious bands. Some of the vignettes are a little too self-consciously Bergman-esque, but Steen manages to capture the drama and sadness surrounding his band's end with minimal fuss. Besides Steen's 80-minute documentary, we also get some shakily-shot live material from Refused's last album, 1997's seminal *The Shape of Punk to Come*, and videos for 'Rather Be Dead' and 'New Noise', the latter being possibly the greatest video ever made. *SP*

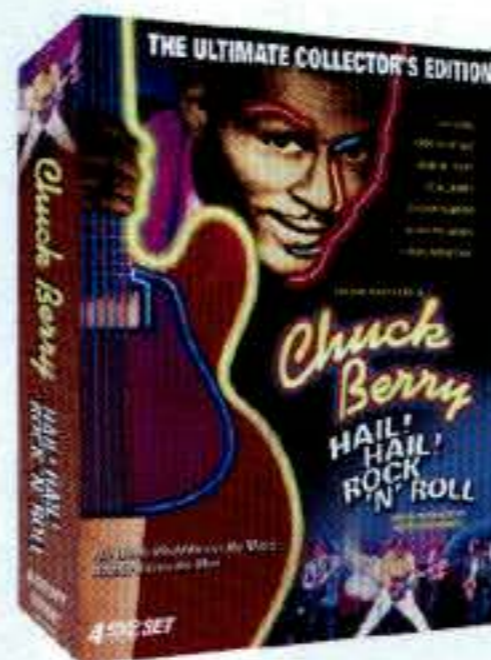


It may be unauthorized, but **UNDER REVIEW: THE VELVET UNDERGROUND** is a smart, professional production that lives up to its subtitle — "an independent critical analysis." The producers have gathered an informative array of Velvet experts and associates — including drummer Moe Tucker, John Cale replacement Doug Yule, Factory artist Billy Name, and *Village Voice* music editor Robert Christgau — to tell the story of the New York quartet's rise and fall and why, although never commercially successful, the Velvets were one of the most influential bands in the history of modern music. The absence of VU principals Lou Reed and John Cale, while unfortunate, does not damage the production, although their insight into the band's end would be appreciated. *SP*



The shooting death of D-12 member Proof on April 11 at the Triple C after-hours club on Detroit's notorious Eight Mile Road casts a pall over the release of **D-12: LIVE IN CHICAGO**. Eminem's breakout helped fuel interest in his band, but the other five members — Proof, Kon Artist, Bizarre, Swift and Kuniva — were equally creative performers, and their two albums, *Devil's Night* and *D-12 World*, racked up sales on their own merit. It's sad to think that the seventeen tracks performed here would become an epitaph to a band disrupted by the violence that continues to stalk urban music. Even more ironic is that the venue of Proof's death would be glorified in the Eminem movie (*8 Mile*) which gave so much credibility to their music. At face value, *Live in Chicago* captures the six performers in their prime, displaying a tongue-in-cheek attitude in songs like 'My Band' and 'Rockstar'. D-12 was a serious creative force whose members obviously had fun with their music. Let's hope that they can override this obviously painful setback and somehow carry on. *KS*

The latest Under Review artist is the amazing Kate Bush whose profile presents a totally unique performer. Discovered by Pink Floyd guitarist David Gilmour at 19, Bush's combination of Lindsay Kemp-style mime choreography, a unique contralto, and a series of stunningly visual lyrics launched her debut album, *The Kick Inside*, to No. 1 on the British charts in 1978. This was fuelled by her groundbreaking debut single, 'Wuthering Heights', marked by a riveting video. The 90-minute **UNDER REVIEW: KATE BUSH** features rare interviews and concert footage by Bush, insightful comments from Radio DJ Paul Gambaccini and *Mojo* magazine's Phil Sutcliffe, plus clips from some of Bush's most compelling videos, including 'Cloudbusting', 'Running Up That Hill' and 'Wow'. In a career spanning 27 years, Bush has toured only once and only created eight albums, the last, *Aerial* (2005), after a 13-year hiatus, yet she remains an unique performer still revered on both sides of the Atlantic. *KS*



So Universal Studios decides to honour your 60th birthday by filming a celebrity-studded concert to honour your music. Top-notch director Taylor Hackford (*Ray*) is drafted to helm the bio-pic, and an all-star musical cast quarter-backed by Rolling Stones guitarist Keith Richards and featuring Eric Clapton, Robert Cray, Linda Ronstadt, Julian Lennon and Etta James is recruited to support an unique rock & roll celebration at the prestigious Fox Theatre in St Louis. If you are legend Chuck Berry, your response is to sabotage the gig and hold the film crew hostage. Those who saw **HAIL! HAIL! ROCK 'N' ROLL** back in 1986 could not have imagined what Hackford's crew went through to film that concert. Now with the release of this four-disc DVD (including four hours of extras), Hackford and Richards' horrors are painfully documented. From day one of the six-day shooting schedule, Berry boycotted the sessions unless bags of money were provided. Right in the midst of rehearsals, Berry bolts to play a concert in Cleveland, catches the flu and is rendered hoarse for the big finale. In desperation, Hackford scheduled two concerts; Berry forgot lyrics during the first and his vocals were totally shot during the second. The crowd still loved the gigs but Berry had to fly out to Los Angeles two months later to re-sing his vocals over the recorded tracks. Hackford salvaged this mess with classic interview footage with Jerry Lee Lewis, Little Richard, Bo Diddley, The Everly Brothers, the late Roy Orbison, Robbie Robertson and Sun Records president Sam Phillips. This memorable package also shows Berry's fractious relationship with Richards who stays cool while the whole production is falling apart around him. Riveting stuff even though Berry comes across as a money-grubbing bastard. *KS*

Compiled by Sean Plummer and Keith Sharp