

some up-close insights via his intimacy with various session notes.

The excerpted video clips will likely be familiar to most fans: the stop-motion "Arnold Layne" on the beach, various Peter Whitehead footage, "Apples and Oranges" on *American Bandstand* and so on; although I don't recall seeing the "Jugband Blues" clip before.

Aimed at the *Mojo* and *Uncut* demographic, these DVD docs go down smoothly enough, but don't provide anything substantive enough to drastically alter your perceptions. (MS)

THE VELVET UNDERGROUND - Under Review (Sexy Intellectual/Chrome Dreams, UK; all regions) DVD

One of the most difficult music documentaries to make is the one where you have little or no participation from the artists themselves. Basically, it leaves the producers at the mercy of the interviewees and, if said interviewees are either inarticulate or have no substantial insights, the results can be boring or even disastrous. *The Velvet Underground Under Review*, however, pulls it off.

Lacking Lou Reed, John Cale, and Sterling Morrison, this could have easily slipped into a tired recitation of the "most influential band on the punk era" platitudes we've already heard over and over.

But by balancing the views of fans and writers with members Doug Yule and Maureen Tucker, Warhol associate Billy Name, and *Velvet Underground & Nico* engineer Norman Dolph, the producers have managed to come up with a pretty solid film.

Whether involving such insiders or other commentators such as Clinton Heylin, Robert Christgau, and Joe Harvard, the discussion sticks almost exclusively to the Velvets—as it should; their music stands on its own and doesn't need validation from a bunch of indie rock hacks. While some of this will be old hat to the seasoned fan, there are a few interesting angles—such as the effect of John Cale leaving the band in 1968 (which resulted in a less avant-garde sound) and how Tucker's primitive, organic drumming defined the band as much as the off-kilter lyrics. Even more revealing is the interview with Dolph, who relates some interesting anecdotes about his experiences with the band.

Another reason this documentary relies on the strength of its interviews is that there isn't much footage of the Velvet Underground available—and indeed, this offers little other than a few cursory clips of the Exploding Plastic Inevitable, plus brief glimpses of various performances. But a band as great as the Velvet Underground deserves a good documentary, and with *Under Review*, they now have one. (Doug Sheppard)

MUDDY WATERS - Muddy Waters Classic Concerts (Image Entertainment)

Long revered as one of the most significant blues albums ever released, *At Newport 1960* was massively influential in bringing the blues to a broader audience. Alexis Korner's seminal Blues Incorporated album, *R&B from the Marquee* covered four of the tracks and *Rolling Stone* ranked it 348 of the "500 Greatest Albums of All Time." *Muddy Waters Classic Concerts* has 26 minutes of footage from the 1960 Newport Jazz Festival upon which *At Newport 1960* was derived as well as concert footage from two other phases of his career.

The Newport footage includes four of the nine tracks which appeared on the LP plus "Rolling

Stone" (aka "Catfish") and "Mean Mistreater/Going to Chicago Blues." "I've Got My Mojo Working," Parts One and Two is just brimming with kinetic energy and at one point, harpist James Cotton and Muddy start dancing together on stage to the delight of the audience. "(I'm Your) Hoochie Coochie Man" is also good and both of these stalwart's are performed at all three concerts. "Tiger In Your Tank" (also included in the 1968 concert) is also outstanding. "Mean Mistreater/Going to Chicago Blues" was the finale and the band was joined on stage by other musicians plus Sammy Price, Betty Jeannette and Jimmy Rushing who all trade vocals with Muddy.

While the black and white footage is a bit faded, it is quite watchable and the sound is stereo with the video synched to the album except for the two bonus tracks where the stereo masters could not be located.

Next comes the complete set from the Copenhagen Jazz Festival, filmed on October 27, 1968. Retaining only pianist Otis Spann from the Newport lineup (who sings a cover of the T-Bone Walker number, "Cold, Cold Feeling"), the band, including harpist Paul Oscher, really cooks. Oscher, incidentally, joined the band in 1967 becoming the first white musician to become a member of the most prestigious blues band in the world. The black and white footage is exceptional and the editing is terrific.

For the third concert, filmed at the Molde Jazz Festival in Norway on August 1, 1977, Muddy is backed by a completely different band including pianist Pine Top Perkins and guitarist Bob Margolin (although, confusingly, there is a guitarist in the lineup named Luther Johnson who is a different person than the Luther Johnson who played guitar for the Waters band at the Copenhagen Jazz Festival. This eight-song set was filmed in color and includes a great version of "Blow Wind Blow."

Also included as bonus features: live performances of "The Blues Had A Baby And They Named It Rock & Roll" (1977) plus interviews from the *Old Grey Whistle Test* (1972) and the Molde Jazz Festival (1977). The accompanying 16-page booklet includes an essay by Bob Margolin.

This set was put out by the "Reeling In The Years" folks who also produced the excellent series, *The American Folk-Blues Festival* (reviewed in UT #22) and is highly recommended. (Jeff Watt)

THE WHO - The Summit 1975: 30th Anniversary Edition (4Reel) Bootleg

While fans continue to marvel at the surviving recordings from the Who's best known tours—the '69 opera house engagements, the '70 run behind *Tommy*—one could make the case that the band's most aesthetically distinguished in-concert period might also be its most overlooked.

Their canonical studio recordings having come to a close with the release of *Quadrophenia*, the Who's post-'73 artistry was reliant, almost wholly, on their stage endeavors. And what transpired on enough nights in 1975 remains, even from the vantage point of a generation or two on, almost startling; music whose quality stood in distinguished relief to the burdened, sluggish work the band was then issuing on vinyl. In Toronto, for instance, the Who unleashed a set more consistent, and more consistently alive, than their Leeds gig five years previous, the acknowledged benchmark of official concert recordings.

Thankfully, the band was almost as good at the Summit in Houston, the centerpiece show for this DVD, a fan testimonial with a roughhewn filmic



dexterity—an intuition, or simply a knack, of pointing the camera where the camera ought to be pointed—a quick pan to Keith Moon as he charges into a break on "Amazing Journey"—the frantic pace of drums as lead instrument—the exchanges between the band members themselves, Townshend's various cues, directing tempo, altering volume, working the ensemble. The Summit show is documented in full, but as a bonus feature there's everything that survives—footage and audio—of the Who's Pontiac Silverdome gig from the same year, a recording that, even in piecemeal fashion—and maybe more so for it, the potential for gaps and lulls thus curtailed—underscores the band's '75 theme of unbeknownst, non-anticipated triumph—though music of this caliber owes nothing of its accomplishment to diminished expectations. (Colin Fleming)

MAYOR OF SUNSET STRIP (First Look Pictures)

You'd think a documentary about legendary LA scene maker and longtime KROQ-FM DJ Rodney Bingenheimer, a guy who's devoted his life to happening music, groovy girls, fab clothes and perfect hair for the last 40 years, would be a lot of fun. Unfortunately, director George Hickenlooper had something else in mind. Though *Mayor of Sunset Strip* offers its fair share of laughs and pop tingles along the way, by the time it ends, one is left with a somewhat unpleasant aftertaste.

Hickenlooper, who directed the excellent documentary on the making of *Apocalypse Now*, *Hearts of Darkness*, has, by his own admission, no particular interest in pop music. What he apparently wanted to make was a film about the attraction of celebrity. Tellingly, Hickenlooper cites Terry Zwigoff's *Crumb* as inspirational in his approach to making the Bingenheimer film. Trouble is, where Robert Crumb is a loquacious and cerebral subject, Rodney Bingenheimer is anything but. Too often, the camera lingers on a somewhat bewildered Rodney, as he wonders what to make of some question Hickenlooper has posed to him. Throughout, Rodney is depicted as something of a pathetic, if undeniably sweet, nowhere man. It's said Rodney was not at all happy with how the movie turned out, and it's easy to understand why.

If one ignores the director's unnecessary attempts to inject heaviness into the proceedings, there are plenty of kicks to be had in *Mayor of Sunset Strip*. Kim Fowley, for one, refuses to take things too seriously, and his appearances never fail to give the film a lift. The video and photo montages are well-done, especially the sequence in which Rodney appears, Zelig-like, in a series of music videos by the Four Seasons, the Mamas & Papas, and others. There are star cameos galore, and, almost in spite of Hickenlooper's contrary intentions, the simple joys of pop music shine through. (David Biasotti)

FESTIVAL! - THE NEWPORT FOLK FESTIVAL (Eagle Vision)

Murray Lerner's documentary *Festival!* is the granddaddy of concert films. An amalgam of four Newport Folk Festivals held between 1963 and 1966, listing the performers in the credits alone would eat up most of the allotted words for a review. But to do so would misrepresent the contents of this film. For with few exceptions, performances are presented in the briefest of snippets and no performance of any song is presented in its entirety.

The film is B&W, which could lead to beautiful

