

DVD REVIEWS



FAIRPORT CONVENTION 35th Anniversary Concert

MVD Visual

SANDY DENNY Under Review

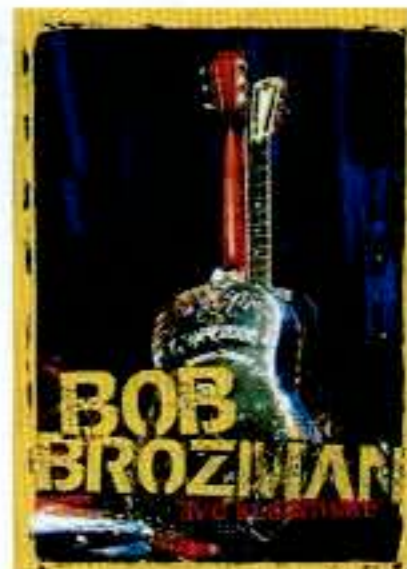
Sexy Intellectual

Fairport Convention has been one of the most consistent brand names in Britain for decades. Most of the faces have changed—many have come and gone, including the quasi-legendary Richard Thompson and the late Sandy Denny. The holdouts (guitarist/vocalist Simon Nicol is the last remaining founder; bassist/mandolinist Dave Pegg joined in 1970, violinist Ric Sanders in 1985, while the other current members are acoustic stringsman/singer Chris Leslie and drummer Gerry Conway) have grown some wrinkles, but the music has changed little through the years. Fairport long ago turned down the volume to reconnect more fully with the folk half of their iconic folk-rock, but their stylistic evolution follows a relatively straight line from 1967 to the present.

Veteran Conventioneers will know what to expect from this live DVD, shot at the Anvil Theatre in Basingstoke, England in February 2002. Fairport never delivers a less than satisfying performance, and this low-key, homey set is no exception. Thompson-era material ("Meet On The Ledge"), traditional tunes and newer compositions complement one another well, and the band of seasoned pros handles all of it with flair. Interviews fill up the extra space.

Sandy Denny Under Review is billed as an "independent critical analysis," and that's pretty much the size of it: an album-by-album stroll through the much-loved vocalist's all-too-brief career (Denny died at age 31 in 1978 after falling down a flight of stairs). With commentary from musicians, critics and the like, accompanied mostly by still photos and too few live clips, this one's for the already converted.

—JEFF TAMARKIN



BOB BROZMAN Live In Germany

Ruf

Bob Brozman is a virtuoso on the National metal-bodied resonator guitar who, over his long career, has released a string of solo albums as well as collaborations with musicians from such locales as Japan, India, Papua New Guinea, Reunion Island and Hawaii. His recent release *Blues Reflex* found him revisiting the primal stylings of 1920s Mississippi blues pioneer Charley Patton, and when Brozman's solo tour stopped in Köln, Germany in December 2005, he had the blues on his mind. Brozman's slide and fingerpicking guitar work is, in a word, stupefying; his singing

is less so. Despite the blues-centric program, Brozman can't help but incorporate some aspects of his vast world music experience. "Guitar Anthropology" is a "tour of the world in five minutes through the medium of open tuning" that takes the listener from Hawaii to South Africa to Madagascar and finally Calcutta. And though Brozman's French-to-English translation of the Edith Piaf signature "La Vie En Rose" probably lost most of the German club audience, they were likely paying closer attention to his flying fingers than his voice anyway.

—JEFF TAMARKIN



THE VICE GUIDE TO TRAVEL

Vice

This anthology of short, weird documentary-style pieces falls somewhere between the hallucinatory immersion experiences of *Sublime Frequencies* and cable shows like *I Shouldn't Be Alive*. Various hipsters affiliated with *Vice* magazine travel to parts of the world your average American would give a toe to avoid ever getting close to, like the jungles of the Congo, the Afghan illegal weapons bazaars, all-night favela parties in Brazil, etc. They're seeking bizarre and/or dangerous experiences, and they get 'em, whether they're indulging in native drugs while searching for a mythical living dinosaur with Pygmy tribesmen, visiting the last two survivors of the

Aryan "Nueva Germania" colony in Paraguay, wandering through the abandoned, highly radioactive city of Chernobyl, or shopping for arms in Bulgaria. If you let wild-man journalist William Vollmann host a TV show, you'd get something a lot like this, though maybe with even more prostitutes and gunfire. The warning on the box advises that the DVD contains "nudity, guns, drugs, cussing and assorted other heaviness," and they're not kidding. It's packaged with a very nice hardcover book that gives more background information on each story, though, marking this as no mere exploitation job—it's a journey into parts of the world mainstream journalists won't bother visiting. Well worth checking out.

—PHIL FREEMAN



THE ROUGH GUIDE TO THE BLUES

From the hardship suffered by black sharecroppers in the Mississippi Delta nearly a hundred years ago, the blues, a deep soulful music full of passion and rhythm, was born. Featuring a collection of legendary blues heroes recorded throughout the twentieth century, *The Rough Guide To The Blues* tells the story of how the blues began, developed and eventually become the roots of rock 'n' roll.

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The CD features topical songs performed by several artists including: Jason Lindner, Claudia Acuna, Pyeng Threadgill, Howard Glazer, David Rovics, Baba Israel, and others. There are 16 tracks. The genres include blues, hip hop, latin, afro-beat, jazz, folk and old time-country.

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