

gravitas of the old men you sometimes see drumming in the urban parks from which they had learned, is a totally spiritual experience. The arrangements are classic, the playing is faultless and powered by the fires of youth.

A bit older and rougher, the Grateful Dead were already verging on superstardom when this set was filmed. Pig Pen (Ron McKernan) leads it off with Otis Redding's "Hard To Handle," and the band puts out that inimitable roar, topped by Jerry Garcia's instantly recognizable git-riffs. "China Cat Sunflower" rocks and stumbles down the alley, and "I Know You Rider" does its thing as always. Sometimes they can sound so sloppy and goofy, then the next time you listen to the same cut, it just rocks!

Jefferson Airplane steps up with "The Ballad of You And Me And Pooneil" which includes a Jack Casady solo which will shake your soul and make you see visions, typical Casady. Is anybody weirder than Grace Slick? Well, you get to consider that with "Eskimo Blue Day," actually a favorite of mine.

The show concludes with a monster jam including members of all three bands, as well as a few other local musicians. It's pretty interesting to see the spirit of the day, in the way they all seem to push each other forward.

Visuals not to be missed: beautiful girl in slow-mo, sensual moves—(she's actually dancing like Clem Kadiddlehopper!) Casady's hands on "Pooneil;" killer woman in fantastic clothes, moving with purpose. You're seeing what went on in the Temple, the great, the good, and the hopelessly silly. There has been nothing like it since.

—Robin the Hammer



JOHN MORRISH

The Folk Handbook
(Backbeat Books)

The folk in question is English folk music, and this book and accompanying CD do a

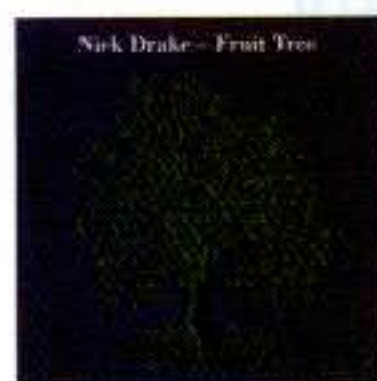
nice job of capturing the flavor and history of music that has influenced more than you might think at first blush. Over 90 songs are covered in the book, which divides the tunes into subject areas, including love, drinking, trickery, war, murder, seduction, and more. The CD features a *cappella* versions of 14 of the tunes, a great addition for readers who are interested in learning the melodies without reading music, or people who just want to hear the tunes in authentic traditional forms.

The Folk Handbook provides historical background about these songs, and explains how the tunes influenced contemporary musicians, including many popular rock 'n'

roll composers. Obvious fans of English folk music include bands like Fairport Convention and Steeleye Span, who added rock instrumentation and backbeat rhythms to a number of these songs, introducing them to new audiences in the process. Traffic's famous recording of "John Barleycorn," Led Zeppelin's recording of "Gallows Pole," and Simon and Garfunkel's recording of "Scarborough Fair" are all referenced; the book features a history of each tune, including each melody in a more traditional style. It can be rather surprising how different they are from the versions heard on rock 'n' roll radio.

This is not a "fake book." There is no tablature, and there are no charts or chords provided for accompanists. *The Folk Handbook* sets out to teach you about the history of these songs, and teach you the words and melodies that were (and can still be) sung in pubs, around campfires, or by any other groups gathered together for a traditional sing-along. For a folk music lover, there's a lot here to enjoy.

—Jim Ground



NICK DRAKE

Fruit Tree 3 CD box-set
(UME/Fontana)

"Time has told me, 'you're a rare, rare find, a troubled cure for a

troubled mind,'" wrote Nick Drake, who knew he had something special to offer the world. The problem was, in the late '60s, the world didn't know it. Thirty years after his suicide, a Volkswagen ad featured the title track to his final album "Pink Moon," and Drake's record sales saw an unprecedented rise. In an effort to appease Drake's steadily growing fan base, his estate, Bryter Music, has released an inclusive box set containing all three completed Drake albums, a DVD entitled "A Skin Too Few," and a 108-page book featuring interviews with Drake's colleagues. Essentially, you get all the Nick Drake you'll need in one purchase (although while they were at it, they could have included the five tracks from the uncompleted album).

Nick Drake was considered a failure in his own time. What today has been noted as innovative and virtuosic music, was then considered an awkward mix of folk and jazz.

On Drake's first two studio efforts *Five Leaves Left* adds a string orchestral arrangement, and *Bryter Layter* includes the standard bass, drums accompaniment. *Pink Moon*, dismisses all other musical furnishings and lets Drake's sound stand out on its own. Not only does Drake display unbelievable precision and virtuosity on the guitar, he proves to be an astounding poet, his lyrics able to stand on their own in their metrical

perfection, his words eerily prophetic in their desolation. All three albums are worth owning and loving. They tell the story of a musical, manic genius struggling to reach an audience whose unwillingness to listen left him heartbroken. As Drake tells us, "Fame is but a Fruit Tree," and his renown continues to grow long after he's gone.

—Ali Green



NICK DRAKE

Under Review DVD
(MVD)

The Under Review series does an excellent job of exploring Drake's brief life by talking to those who worked closely with

him, along with other experts on his career. Their analysis of the way Drake's songs offer autobiographical information about his fragile emotional state is particularly insightful. The documentary addresses Drake's proficiency in sax and piano (instruments he played long before the guitar), and discusses how musicians like Coltrane and Miles Davis influenced his work, contributing to Drake's unique mix of folk and jazz.

For those of us who are already long time fans of Nick Drake's short but impressive catalog, this DVD is a great way to learn all the gritty details about this enigmatic figure without buying a box set of albums you probably already own.

—Ali Green

GANDOLF MURPHY AND THE SLAMBOVIAN CIRCUS OF DREAMS

Joe's Pub, NYC

The Slambovian Circus of Dreams is not your average circus with animals, but a circus of music, many loyal fans, and dreams. Performing at the intimate Joe's Pub, the music sounded strangely familiar at first, reminding me of some of the great performers I had seen before—Dylan, James Taylor, Tom Petty and Pink Floyd—but the songs were distinct and new. The group calls their unique brand of music "hillbilly-floyd, folk-pop." The lead singer, Joziah Longo, has great range, haunting on many of the songs; he's backed by Tink on accordion, cello and flute, Sharkey on lead guitar and slide mandolin, Tony on drums and Chen on bass to round out the tight, accomplished band.

Their latest album, *Flapjacks from the Sky* (a two-disc set) made me like them even more. The band's unique music grows on you as you listen to it.

—Peter Lynch