

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN & THE E STREET BAND

Hartford Civic Center, Hartford, CT

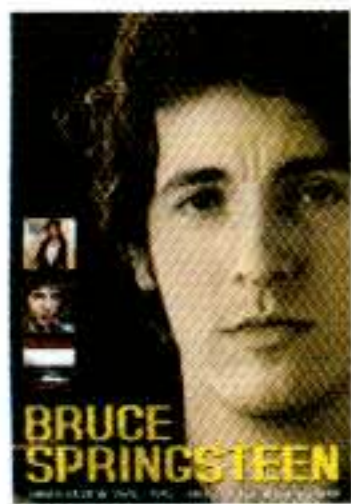
Legions of Springsteen followers witnessed what would turn out to be one of the best first show performances by the band, which began their tour in support of the group's ninth album, *Magic*.

The Boss strutted to the front of the sparse stage as a calliope rose at the back, and the E Streeters launched into a rocking version of "Radio Nowhere," the first single from *Magic*. What followed was a two hour plus set featuring 22 new and classic Springsteen songs, as well as the Patti Scialfa tune "Town Called Heartbreak" from her *Play It As It Lays* album.

It's apparent that Mr. Springsteen is having the time of his life, having cast off most of the world's burdens in favor of a more populist approach. During "Darlington County," Bruce leapt to the front of the stage, letting fans play his guitar. His energy was infectious as he traded guitar riffs with Nils Lofgren and Steven Van Zandt, and he found a moment to steal a kiss from wife Scialfa during the band's performance of "Magic." Other standouts were saxophonist Clarence Clemons' scathing solos during "Promised Land" and Max Weinberg's stellar drumming on the working class anthem "Night." Roy Bittan and Danny Federici abandoned their keyboards in favor of the accordion on "Waitin' On A Sunny Day." The intense trilogy of "The Rising," "Last To Die" and "Long Walk Home" featured a searing harmonica solo by Bruce, along with a Soozie Tyrell violin accompaniment that grabbed the electricity in the arena and wove it into the song's fabric like silk.

The Magic Tour, like the album, is worth the modest admission price to share in this joyous and spiritually enriching experience.

—Howard B. Leibowitz



BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN

Under Review: 1978-1982 DVD (MVD)

This examination of Bruce Springsteen's career focuses on three albums: *Darkness on the Edge of Town*, *The River* and *Nebraska*, the interim recordings between 1975's breakthrough *Born to Run* and 1985's smash *Born in the U.S.A.*

Through commentary, archival footage and stills, this film analyzes Springsteen's emotional state as he wrote and recorded these albums. According to this documentary, Springsteen embodies a duality, described as "triumphant music wedded to the saddest themes,"

which does ring true for many of his songs. During this period, the documentary claims, Springsteen suffered from both depression and a bar set too high with *Born to Run*.

The argument runs thus: *Darkness* was composed as an album, a narrative from start to epilogue, of the dignity and despair in working class people, reflective of troubled writer Springsteen. *The River* represents the work of a maturing artist, with a mixed bag of personal and pop songs and *Nebraska* is spare, personal and grave. The trilogy is described as emblematic of America's loss of innocence in the latter part of the 20th century. I'll buy most of that.

Springsteen may be a genius, but one shouldn't assume everything geniuses do is brilliant: I know one certifiable brainiac who lost a couple fingers to a lawn mower—how dumb was that? This film scrutinizes three of Bruce's dark, less-than-blockbuster albums and treats them as praiseworthy—and parts of them actually are. For casual Springsteen fans, this examination focuses on the minutia, not the meat of his career, but for diehard devotees it could spark arguments long into the night.

—Suzanne Cadgene

SQUEEZE/THE ALTERNATE ROUTES

Nokia Theatre, NYC

Many opening acts provide background music for the chattering attendees waiting to see the headliner. Once the Alternate Routes took the stage, the audience slowly turned their attention from finding a good standing spot to the musical gift in front of them. Signed in 2006, the band sounded as if they had been on that stage their whole lives. The presence and charisma of lead singer Tim Warren helped win over the crowd, gaining new fans by playing some of the best from their debut album *Time is a Runaway*, as well as a few new ones that will have people anxious for the second album's release. Moral: don't skip the opening act or you could miss a band that will someday headline.

Headliner Squeeze turned back the clocks and had the 30-somethings and up boogying the night away. The reunion tour for this '70s/'80s new wave/pop band from the U.K. drew a hefty crowd full of excitement. The band was supporting their new "greatest hits" album, *Essential Squeeze*, and churned out over an hour and a half of them at Nokia, including their best-known song, "Pulling Mussels (From The Shell)," I easily recognized the originality and catchiness of their catalogue throughout the show.

Whether they were there for the Alternate Routes or were simply accompanying their parents (if not Squeeze fans themselves), the audience was treated to a lively show. As a bonus to those with slightly less expensive tickets, video monitors towards the back

of the theatre projected close-ups of wind dramatically blowing through Glenn Tilbrook's hair. I couldn't help but be transported back to my childhood while listening to those synths!

—Samantha Goldstein and Katie Boone



TONY PALMER, Director

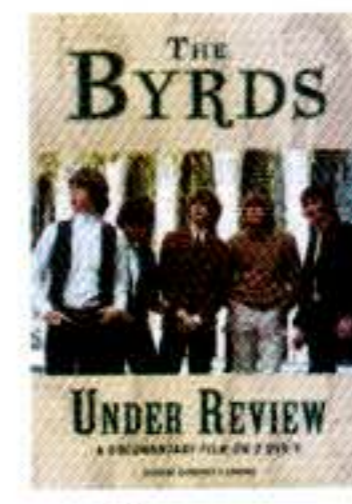
All My Loving DVD (Isolde Films)

All My Loving is a powerful music and antiwar documentary originally broadcast on BBC in

1968. The title is certainly a contrast to the content of the film. Artists such as Jimi Hendrix, Cream, the Who and Frank Zappa had been denied television coverage up until this time. This film is not simply about the artists or the pop culture world of psychedelic music in 1968, it's—every bit as much—a protest of the war, although no opinions are rendered. Images are simply there for the viewer to see, and we are left to determine our own opinions. One cannot escape the quick, horrific footage of the war mixed with visuals of the artists' performances, and the music almost becomes secondary. The music certainly adds to the overall feel of the film, especially the performances of the Who and Jimi Hendrix as they destroy their instruments on stage.

According to director Tony Palmer, the film was actually John Lennon's idea. "John said, 'You've got to do something to get these guys exposure on television. They're hammering at the door, except that the guys on the inside are deaf, and probably dumb and blind as well.' So I did, and *All My Loving* was the result. Even using the title was his suggestion. It caused a hell of a stir, but then I suspect he knew it would."

—Dan Guilfoyle



THE BYRDS

Under Review DVD (MVD)

Like most well-scripted rock documentaries—and this is a documentary, not a concert film—*The Byrds: Under Review* gives

an all-encompassing history of the Byrds, all the way back to the roots of its most prominent members (mainly Roger McGuinn, Gene Clark and David Crosby), and not only how but why the members ended up together. *Under Review* presents a marvelous timeline of one of America's most endearing, influential (and underrated) bands.

Journalists, musicians, rock critics and former Byrds such as Crosby, Johnny Rogan,