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Quick Flicks
By Kevin Wierzbicki**All Tomorrow's Parties- U2- Umphrey's
McGee- Renaissance****All Tomorrow's Parties**
Various Artists
Warped Films

All Tomorrow's Parties is a most unique annual music festival---you might even say weird---but it's a very good kind of weird defined by artists who tend to defy categorization. If you've never been to ATP I can guarantee that you'll want to add the festival to your [wish list](#) after seeing this film. Working with footage shot over the entire ten-year history of the festival, the filmmakers have compiled a non-stop quirk-fest out of dozens of clips featuring artists like Mogwai, Slint, [Animal Collective](#) and Grinderman. There's no narration; just the underlying theme of outrageous fun provided by non-mainstream musicians. One minute you're feeling the beat and getting tribal with Battles, the next you're grooving to blues howled by Seasick Steve and the next you're shaking like a rabid coyote while Iggy Pop and the Stooges rip through "I Wanna Be Your Dog." You really couldn't put together a better promo for the festival but this is not a watch-it-once kind of film; there's enough good music, humor and bon viveur spirit layered in to hold up through many viewings. Also featured are Sonic Youth, the Gossip, GZA, Belle & Sebastian, Portishead, Grizzly Bear and many others. [Get it here](#)

The Rebirth of Cool: U2 in the Third Millennium
Sexy Intellectual

Another in the line of analytical documentaries from Sexy Intellectual, *The Rebirth of Cool* takes an in-depth look at how U2 reinvented themselves after the super-flop of their *Pop* album. There are snippets of performance to be viewed here but nothing of enough length to be satisfying and nothing that hasn't already been available elsewhere. But to present a concert or a selection of videos is not the film's purpose. The idea is to show how the band rebounded from *Pop* with two successful albums in *All That You Can't Leave Behind* and *How to Dismantle an Atomic Bomb*. To that end the film does an excellent job, gleaning commentary by picking the brains of music journalists, U2 colleagues and various other insiders who were there. Definitely not for the casual U2 fan but a treat for anyone who studies the band or the [music business](#) in general. [Get it here](#)

Umphrey's McGee
Live
E1/Koch Vision

The bulk of this show, filmed in Umphrey's hometown of Chicago, has been previously broadcast as an episode of PBS-TV's *Soundstage* program. Unfairly labeled as a "jam band," Umphrey's McGee is far more sophisticated than that. Indeed many of their tunes are lengthy and feature improvisation but there are not many jam bands that can twist up a tune like UM does, like the way they seamlessly segue a reggae rhythm into a Mott the Hoople "All the Way From Memphis" boogie on "Got Your Milk (Right Here)," and that's just one of several changes the song goes through. Over the course of *Live's* set list (and sometimes over the course of one song) you'll hear Crusaders-style jazz, Rush-like bombast, [Steely Dan](#) cool funk and even a little samba. Six songs not seen on the [PBS](#) broadcast are included, among them a version of "Made to Measure" from the *Mantis* album. [Get it here](#)

Renaissance
Song of Scheherazade
Cherry Red

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Renaissance was a woman-fronted prog group from England that had their heyday in the '70s. Like so many of the second-tier of talented British groups from the era they never really caught on in the U.S. despite significant airplay on underground stations of the day. This [DVD](#) contains two full shows that catch the band at their prime; one filmed in 1976 and the other in 1979. Great [keyboard](#) work and stellar vocals from Annie Haslam are the band's hallmarks and both shine here; the problem is you may as well be listening to an audio tape. None of the band members has much stage presence, including the attractive Haslam, and to top it off both shows were shot in bad lighting. Still, longtime Renaissance fans including those who haven't thought about the band for decades will dig the presentation of favorites like "The Vultures Fly High," "Mother Russia" and "Song of Scheherazade." [Get it here](#)

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