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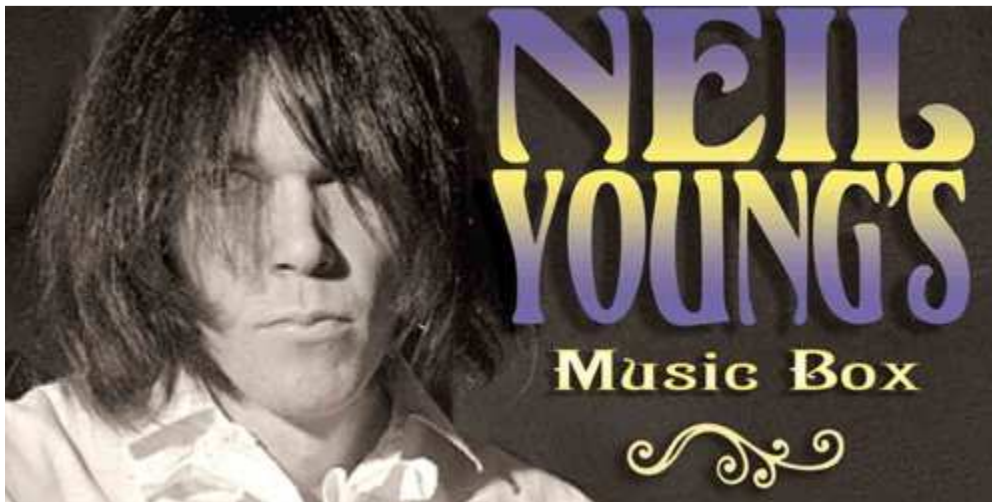
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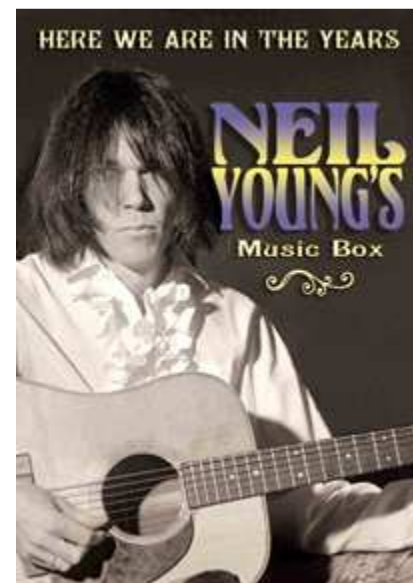


Lots of Talk, Little Action in 'Neil Young's Music Box: Here We Are In the Years'

By [Christel Loar](#) 18 July 2011
PopMatters Associate Music Editor

Neil Young's Music Box: Here We Are In the Years is an unauthorized documentary DVD. That description should tell you several things about it before you've even watched, but if not, allow me to elucidate: The fact that it's a documentary means that it's mainly a bunch of talking heads, mostly music critics such as *Rolling Stone's* Anthony DeCurtis, discussing Neil Young's musical influences, as well as his ongoing influence on his peers and musicians that have come in his wake.

This would be all well and fine, as sometimes music critics can have interesting insights, were it not for the other part of the



description. The fact that this DVD is an unauthorized production inevitably means there's very little cleared music or footage in it to back up the things the critics are saying.

Neil Young's Music Box is slightly different than other unauthorized documentaries of this style, in that, rather than an overview of his entire career and dissection of tidbits of sensationalized biographical information, it focuses specifically upon analyzing the musical influences that shaped Young's own style and sound. The film's narrative follows Young's musical career more or less chronologically, from early rock 'n' roll heroes Elvis Presley, Chuck Berry and Roy Orbison to his immersion in folk and influences that followed in the late '60s, George Harrison and Bob Dylan chief among them. It spends a great deal of time on Young's interest in punk rock and new wave in the '70s and '80s and details his influence upon, and collaboration with, artists of the grunge era in—and since—the '90s (He dedicated *Sleeps With Angels* to Kurt Cobain, and has recorded and toured with Pearl Jam).

The diversity of influential artists discussed is interesting in and of itself. The obvious, like Duane Eddy, and the perhaps less obvious for some, like Kraftwerk, are discussed with equal vigor. Unfortunately, this is where the feature's shortcomings are most apparent, because either the clips that would support the connections between Young and his influences are too truncated to back up the comparisons, or because they simply aren't there. While I believe there most certainly is a direct connection between, say, 1982's *Trans* and Young's work with Devo, or his fascination with Kraftwerk, during that period (These connections are well-documented elsewhere, and are the only ones really clearly documented with examples here), it would have been nice for this film to provide more, or clearer, instances of the other ties its participants are making in their interviews.

There are good clips within the film, including live performance footage of Neil Young, but it's all cut into 10- or 15-second bursts, which is unfulfilling and annoying. Additionally, a large portion of it is taken from *Rust Never Sleeps*, so there's not much here that fans will not have seen many times before. There is, naturally, very little else of Neil Young himself to be found as well, only a brief clip of him speaking.

That's the nature of the unauthorized documentary, of course, but one still can't help feeling there should have been more of the artist and more of his music in a production that is supposed to be about him and his musical influences. *Neil Young's Music Box: Here We Are In the Years* runs 120 minutes and its extra features include extended interview segments, digital biographies of the film's contributors and a "Beyond DVD" feature.

Rating:  **Extras rating:** 

Neil Young

Neil Young's Music Box: Here We Are In the Years

(Sexy Intellectuals; US DVD: 21 Jun 2011; UK DVD: 4 Jul 2011)

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Christel Loar is a freelance writer and editor, a part-time music publicist, and a full-time music fan. She is often an overreactor and sometimes an overachiever. When not dodging raindrops or devising escape plans, Christel

is usually found down front and slightly left of center stage reveling in a performance by yet another new favorite band.

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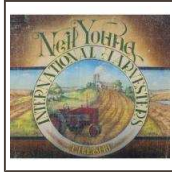


Counterbalance No. 44: Neil Young's 'After the Gold Rush'

By Jason Mendelsohn and Eric Klinger

29 Jul 2011

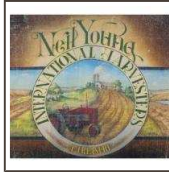
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