

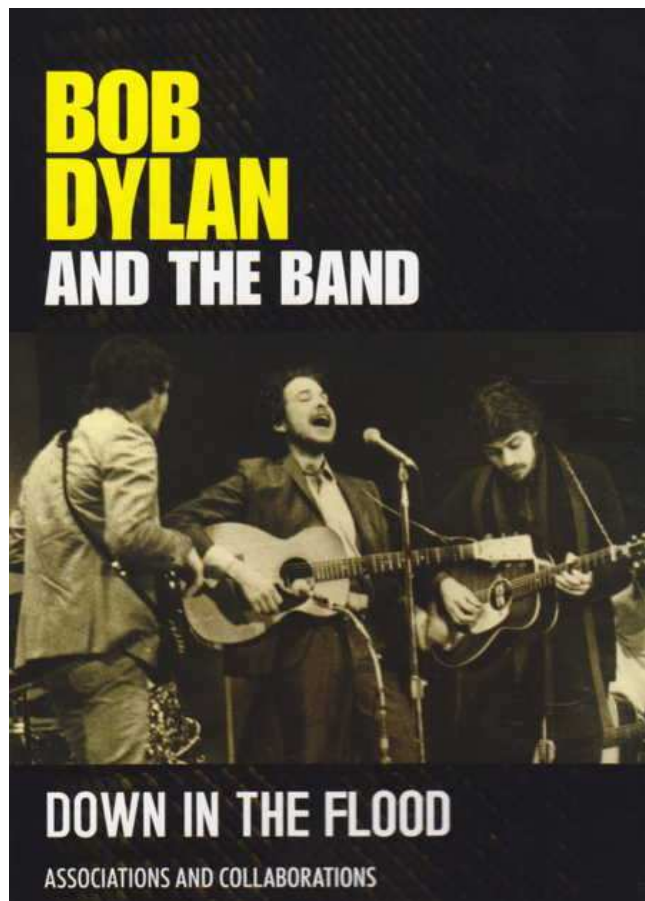
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MJ, TS, JS and MG

Bad's 25th, Country-rocking cheeseheads, Americana-loving Canadians and more

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This week, I'm kicking things off with consideration of the 25th anniversary edition of Michael Jackson's BAD album my review of a country-rocking album from a hot Wisconsin band, followed by review of a DVD about the intertwining careers of Bob Dylan and The Band. The other reviews feature a DVD of The Who's 1975 performance in Texas, a new album by a Texas-based singer/songwriter and the second volume of Sexy Intellectual/MVD's DVD examination of Brian Wilson's songwriting.

'BAD25,' Michael Jackson(Epic/Legacy, HHHH 1/2)

This Sept. 18 deluxe edition contains three CDs, a DVD/CD from the sold-out Wembley Stadium show July 15, 1988, a collectible booklet and lots of music from a time Michael Jackson was on top of the pop-music world presenting the follow-up to the phenomenally successful Thriller. He co-produced this one with Quincy Jones and wrote or co-wrote nine of the album's 11 tracks.

The concert features a tight band, including future superstar Sheryl Crow on backup vocals and future Clapton sideman Greg Phillinganes on keyboards. Three Jackson 5 songs are included. Other highlights include "Billie Jean," "Bad," "Beat It," "Thriller," "Rock With You" and "Human Nature," all replete with the signature moves and vocal idiosyncrasies Michael fans love and others satirize. The show, which was attended by Prince Charles, Princess Diana and 72,000 lucky fans, is very memorable.

CD 1 contains the "BAD" album with the title cut, "The Way You Make Me Feel," "Man in the Mirror," "Smooth Criminal" and more. Highlights among the synthesizers and artificial-sounding drums include

the hits plus the sorta-rocky "Dirty Diana" and the sneakily catchy "Smooth Criminal."

CD two contains bonus tracks, unreleased tracks, demos and (gasp) remixes.

Highlights are the demos showing Michael's song-writing and development processes, which ensured studio musicians and Quincy Jones knew what he had in mind when he got ready for a recording session. Readers know of my aversion to remixes, but fans of those, and folks who want to chart the evolution of one of music's most-important stars, will enjoy this great package.

'Run, Engine Run,' Trapper Schoepp & The Shades (SideOneDummy Records, HHHH)

This Sept. 25 release is the third album from Milwaukee's self-proclaimed "reigning roots rockers." Their lineup is lead vocalist/guitarist Trapper, bassist/vocalist/brother Tanner, drummer Jon Phillip and lead guitarist Graham Hunt, which are supplemented with other musicians.

The Shades will be touring this fall with the Wallflowers and Reverend Peyton as well as CMJ shows. Many songs on this release are catchier than the Wallflowers' new stuff, including the title song, the reminiscent "So Long," the two-stepping "Cold Deck" and the country-rocking anthems "Wishing Well" and "Tracks."

Fans of the likes of Tom Petty, the Jayhawks and Ryan Adams will enjoy this album.

'Down In The Flood,' Bob Dylan & The Band(MVDvisual, HHHH)

This Sept. 25 DVD tells the story of how Dylan, who had gone electric on record and wanted a tight, electric band to tour with, got together in 1965 with The Hawks, a mostly Canadian band that had split from backing rock 'n' roll singer Ronnie Hawkins.

The only thing wrong with DVDs like this is that often-wonderful music isn't heard, but this one has much music among the interviews. Most folks here agree that the negative crowd reactions during Dylan's 1965-66 electric tour were unexplainable, because Dylan had already released two electric albums and had a massive hit with "Like a Rolling Stone."

However, that tour and Dylan's motorcycle accident July 29, 1966, spurred changes of direction for both him and his backing band, who came into their own collaborating and making their own music in upstate New York. Dylan's swing toward country music and the emergence of the first two landmark albums from The Band changed late-1960s music for the better. Fans of both should grab this great video.

'Live in Texas '75,' The Who(Eagle Vision, HHHH 1/2)

This Oct. 9 DVD features one of the greatest live rock 'n' roll bands filmed Nov. 20, 1975, as they kicked off a huge U.S. tour promoting their seventh album, The Who By Numbers. It includes an extended "Tommy" section, a few songs from the current album (which is different than the previous few but still wonderful) and lots of concert favorites such as "Substitute," "My Generation," "Baba O' Riley" and "Won't Get Fooled Again."

The camera work here is inferior to the Isle of Wight DVD reviewed a few years ago; but the irritating item is someone's idea of superimposing still-or-stop-motion Daltrey/Townshend images every time things slow down on stage. Other than that, the show is great, with Keith Moon's irrepressible humor and acrobatic drums, John Entwistle's virtuoso, in-the-pocket bass, Pete's powerful guitar picking and stage direction and Roger's mic-twirling, energetic vocals. Who fans will definitely want to snag this program.

'Free,' Bonnie Bishop(Be Squared Records, HHH 1/2)

This Oct. 9 CD is the debut for singer/songwriter Bonnie Bishop, who moved to Mississippi at age 12 when her stepdad (former Texas A&M football coach Jackie Sherrill) began coaching at Mississippi State University. She left Mississippi in 1995 and returned to Texas to finish high school and attend college, but says she learned about singing in the choir and on the playground in Starkville. The album was produced by Bonnie (vocals, acoustic guitar) with assistance from Jimmy Wallace (piano, organ, clavinet). The other musicians are Steve Mackey (bass), Fred Eltringham (drums/percussion), Rob McNelley (guitars) and Sam Hawksley (guitars).

Highlights include the Stax-flavored "Shrinkin' Violet," the mellower title song, the honky-tonking "Bad

Seed" and the funky opener, "Keep Using Me."

Fans of female soul-blues singer/songwriters will definitely dig this one.

'Brian Wilson: Songwriter 1969-1982,'(MVDvisual, HHHH)

This Oct. 23 DVD is a companion piece to the previously reviewed critical examination of Brian Wilson's songwriting during his "classic period" of 1962-69. Many of the same people are on board: Wrecking Crew (and Beach Boys' studio) drummer Hal Blaine, Brian's friend (Three Dog Night member) Danny Hutton, Beach Boys' 1969-1971 manager Fred Vail, Turtles/Flo & Eddie vocalist Mark Volman and more.

Brian withdrew from live performances in the mid-1960s, and his songwriting/production expertise was beginning to show the effects of depression and drug addiction by the latter part of the decade. Despite a home studio built by the record company, he remained in his bedroom getting worse physically and mentally because rehab didn't exist at the time. Fans who know or are curious about the sad/happy ending of Brian outliving his younger brothers and returning to music will want to see this program.

Ricky Flake, a former punk rocker and current music fan, lives in Biloxi, can be reached at rickyflake@bellsouth.net.

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