

During the punk/New Wave era, Parker was always a square peg in a round hole, immensely talented and charismatic but more pub-rock than punk (his band included one of the greatest pub rockers of all, Brinsley Schwarz). Thus, these two shows make interesting bookends on his career. In 1978, he was a cult favorite, belting out soulful tunes like "Soul Shoes," "Heat in Harlem" and "White Honey." The setting of the Rockpalast broadcast was a Cologne TV studio in front of a subdued audience. The six members of the Rumour are on their game, punching all the right buttons, as Parker's vocals have the bite of someone once bitten but not yet shy. When he sings "I'm Gonna Tear Your Playhouse Down," you sincerely believe someone's domicile will soon be collapsing. The full horn section, normally a no-no (at least for me) with a rock band, really augments the sound well.

The 1980 disc records the Rumour's set during the 7th Rockpalast Night. On the strength of his greatest achievement, *Squeezing Out Sparks* (released in 1979) and the just-released *The Up Escalator*, Parker seemed on the verge of stardom. Without a horn section, he could ride the strength of all this great new material: "Discovering Japan," "Can't Get No Protection," "Passion is No Ordinary Word," "Stupefaction," "Love Without Greed" and his most punk song, "Maneuvers." The band looks more spiffy for this show, with the nicely quaffed Schwarz in a white jacket, coaxing blistering leads out of his V-wing guitar, and the diminutive black-clad Parker more stage savvy (especially when he puts down the guitar and menacingly prowls the stage). Though there are three guitars on most of the songs, the mix sounds tinny on this broadcast, and the band sorely misses Bob Andrews (Nicky Hopkins fills in on piano, but he's mostly buried behind amps and in the mix). The real star of the show is the crowd, which is absolutely bonkers from the first note, waving banners, dancing and chanting non-stop.

And yet, you can almost see stardom slipping away from Parker here. But to his everlasting credit, Parker has never stopped writing and performing music, creating a formidable back catalog that stands alongside any of his contemporaries. More than 20 years after seeing him in 1980, I met and interviewed a considerably more mellow Parker at a music festival where he was performing solo. By then, he was an author (of the underappreciated *Carp Fishing on Valium*) and the best-ever spoken word interpreter of Jack Kerouac (his rendition of *Visions of Cody* on Penguin Audio is indispensable). He exuded contentment, wit and even a sort of hard-bitten wisdom and, of course, expressed not a single regret with his lot in life. (Alan Bisbort)

**MUDDY WATERS & THE ROLLING STONES – Live at the Checkerboard Lounge, Chicago 1981**  
Eagle Vision

Some years ago a story circulated that the Rolling Stones on a visit to Chicago decided to hear some music at a Southside tavern. When the bandleader said that they were in the audience, it's said that he offered a hearty welcome and announced in their honor his band would play a Stones song. They then launched into "Smoke on the Water." It's fun to imagine how each of the Stones would react to being infused with Deep Purple—Mick perhaps getting his tail feathers ruffled; Keith enjoying a good laugh; flappable Charlie unflappable; Bill, of course, already back at the hotel; and Ronnie, if along, too shocked to notice—if it actually happened. But there's no doubt that the Stones did hook up

with Muddy Waters, the greatest of all Chicago electric bluesmen, at the Checkerboard Lounge in 1981. Bootlegs have circulated for years, but now the real deal has finally debuted. Available as either a DVD-only or a DVD-CD combo, *Muddy Waters & The Rolling Stones* catches Muddy, then coming up on his 69th birthday, on a night when health problems and the lingering consequences of an auto accident weren't enough to overpower the pleasure of having his Brit disciples show up and join him on stage. After all, it was he who sparked the whole UK blues phenomenon, and these particular lads even named themselves after one of his tunes.

The two-disc set offers 16 songs on DVD, with 11 tracks duplicated on the CD, plus a bonus smidgen from a Stones show at the Hampton Coliseum in Virginia the following month. Only the last pulls from the Stones' *Tattoo You* set list. The rest is first-class Chicago blues at its best and most electric. Muddy's band opens the show, sans the man himself, with Lovely Lee handling the vocals on "Sweet Little Angel" and "Flip Flop and Fly" and harmonica master Mojo Buford blistering the mike with short solos. The band then goes into a vamp while their leader comes onto the tiny stage, looking haberdasher elegant in a grey silk shirt and suit, straps on his Fender guitar and launches into "You Don't Have to Go."

It's on his second song, "Country Boy," that things begin to sizzle, with Muddy's magic slide burning up and down the guitar neck. Robert Gordon, in the liners says, "Full of fury, the strokes shorten to repeated stabs—a fierce pummeling, then briefly lengthen as if taking a breath only to stab again and again." It's serious fret fornication.

The Stones in the form of Mick, Keith, Ronnie and Ian (of the mighty chin) Stewart, along with their fabulous girlfriends and hanger-ons, then arrive, take the front table, and crack the caps on whiskey bottles while Muddy and his six-piece band power through "Baby Please Don't Go." Mick, all track-suited up, and Keith, looking particularly badass with dangling cigarette, are soon up on stage.

From there on, it's a straight bluesville free-for-all, all captured by multiple cameras, with Muddy and Mick trading vocals, Keith wringing out fiery guitar solos, and Mojo Buford blowing brilliant harp as they work through "Hoochie Coochie Man," "Long Distance Call," "Mannish Boy," "Got My Mojo Workin'," "Next Time You See Me," "One Eyed Woman," "Clouds in My Heart" and "Champagne and Reefe." By mid-show, Buddy Guy, his pal Junior Wells and Lefty Dizz, along with Ian Stewart, have squeezed on the tiny Checkerboard stage to join in the celebration. Muddy Waters would only live another year and a half, but on this night it was, indeed, all champagne and reefe, back when time was still on their side. (Bill Wasserzieher)

**BRIAN WILSON – Songwriter 1969-1982**  
(Chrome Dreams)

Dobie Gray said it and I believe it: "The original's still the greatest." I'm not a fan of sequels, and, since the period covered here wasn't Wilson's greatest (the 2010-issued *Songwriter* spanned 1962 to 1969), I was prepared to be disappointed. But I was wrong: one of the few gripes that might be lodged against this documentary is the pathetic cover shot of our man, which is in many ways refuted by the material presented on the disc. He wasn't at his peak during this era, but he did have his moments of engagement and inspiration, and they, along with misguided moves like

the "Brian Is Back" campaign and the *MIU Album*, are recounted and analyzed by a strong lineup of talking heads: Brian biographer Peter James Carlin, Brother engineer Steve Desper, Cali culture expert Domenic Priore, musicologist Phillip Lambert, Beach Boys manager Fred Vail, Mark Volman, Bruce Johnston and Brian's Spring collaborator David Sandler.

By now we've become accustomed to the lack of 'new' footage that characterizes most docs, so the real measure of any new title is its ability to deliver fresh information and insights. *Songwriter 1969-1982* does so exceedingly well, following a timeline that runs from "Do It Again" and the Brian-Murry-composed single "Breakaway" through *Friends, 20/20, Sunflower, Surf's Up* and the rest on up to *LA Light*. Desper's commentary on how Brian worked in the studio (blazingly fast when he felt like he had a stake in the proceedings) and Sandler's anecdote about Brian's instinctive ear really stand out. Sandler tells of the day he and Brian were driving away from the latter's Bel Air home and heard the rest of the Beach Boys working on "Till I Die" inside Brian's studio. Brian stopped his Lincoln Continental, hopped out and raced up to the studio to address a sonic glitch, which, once remedied, kicked the track into high gear.

Carlin is particularly good discussing the failed "Brian Is Back" exercise and the double-edged sword of Capitol's 1974 *Endless Summer* repackaging (it reinvigorated them as a concert act and established them as "America's band" but consigned them to a second career as oldies recyclers). Lambert, as on the previous *Songwriter* volume, provides (both in the main program and in his extras segment) informed piano demonstrations of Brian's compositional methods, which are utterly fascinating. You'll also learn about Brian's heavy Randy Newman fixation, his aborted but apparently extant country-album collaboration with Fred Vail (an extra feature) and the details of various internal Beach Boys schisms.

A minor quibble: the narrator's and some of the commentators' occasional reliance on orthodox yet dubious lines of thought—i.e. that music fans in the '70s still had problems reconciling the band's image with prevailing "countercultural" attitudes (this is, after all, well after "Good Vibrations"), or that Capitol, as late as 1969, kept demanding cars-and-girls product, as if a retooled "Custom Machine" might hold its own in a "Dark Star"/"Foxy Lady" world. No matter. *Songwriter 1969-1982* is a welcome addition to the field of Bri-Fi scholarship. I'm ready for 1983-2012. (Gene Sculatti)

**THE YARDBIRDS – Making Tracks**  
(Howlin Wolf Pictures) 2 DVD set

With only two original members still on board—rhythm guitarist Chris Dreja and drummer Jim McCarty—today's Yardbirds might appear to be more of a Yardbirds tribute band than the genuine article. But seeing them live will make a believer of you: they're keeping the music and spirit of the Yardbirds alive in a most enjoyable and authentic manner. You'll also leave their shows with a deeper appreciation of the roles McCarty and Dreja played in the group. Along with (both) co-writing many of the Yardbirds' best songs ("Shapes of Things," "Over Under Sideways Down," "Happenings Ten Years Time Ago," et al), McCarty also sang all the high harmony parts, while Dreja had the thankless task of stoking the chords behind some of the most celebrated lead guitarists of the era.

This two-disc set offers nothing in the way of his-

