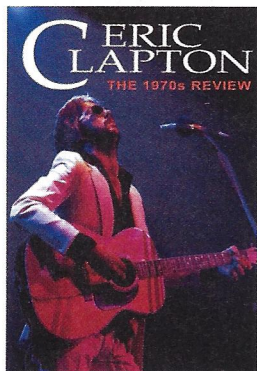


DVD★Reviews



Eric Clapton: The 1970s Review

★★★★

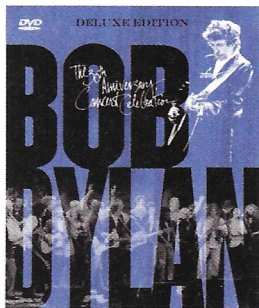
Sexy Intellectual SIDVD 577

God's not really a team player

This entertaining rockumentary is like one of those classy whistle-stop tours of a certain venerable artist that gets shown on Friday night on BBC Four. Easier than reading a book on the subject and probably more fun, this review traces Clapton's career via tantalising footage and a lot of good cop/bad cop talking-head analysis from esteemed rock crits who probably weren't there, plus lashings of insight from musicians and producer types who were.

Clapton's tale is familiar enough. You know he never hangs around long in any one place but uses his addictive personality to fast track himself through Cream, Blind Faith, Derek & The Dominos and the Delaney & Bonnie crew, discovers Tulsa then makes a sequence of solo albums of diminishing worth. The best muso asides come from Bobby Whitlock, who is wry and amusing as he describes life at Eric's Hurtwood Edge

pile; lady Bonnie, who is frazzled beyond repair; and producer Bill Halverson, who offers wise counsel while Clapton and chemically enhanced chums produce an impressive body of work in the early 70s – despite frequent visits to Stephen Stills, Alan Pariser and his wares – before the guitarist discovers reggae music and shoots that ruddy sheriff. *Max Bell*



Bob Dylan 30th Anniversary Concert Celebration: Deluxe Edition

★★★★

Columbia/Legacy, cat no tbc (2DVD)

"Bobfest" live-cast on DVD for the first time

Before Dylan's late 90s resurgence, this 1992 tribute concert, recorded at Madison Square Garden, may well have seemed like something of a Last Waltz for Bob, stuck in neutral during the early part of the decade, struggling to sustain the legend of the Never Ending Tour. Indeed, The Band, who signed off with the Waltz in 1976, are one of a phenomenally high-profile cast of artists queuing up to doff their caps to Dylan: not least Donald Dunn, Steve Cropper and Booker T, the

core of anyone's dream house band.

George Harrison, Roger McGuinn, Willie Nelson and Johnny Cash are among the legends paying tribute to the über-legend (then there's Pearl Jam, holding up the end for transient contemporaries). Stevie Wonder revisits his 1966 gospel-tinged take on Blowin' In The Wind, but, with that song, he's got a sitter; The O'Jays' harmony-laden take on Emotionally Yours is a bigger surprise, rescuing an oft-forgotten song from over-production purgatory on *Empire Burlesque*.

Among the karaoke acts (John Mellencamp, Tracy Chapman), Lou Reed provides the most authentically Dylan moment (and that's counting Bob's own turn-up-at-the-end contributions), leading Cropper and co through a ragged groove on Foot Of Pride. Sinead O'Conner provides the reckless abandon Bob himself might have approved of. Booned almost from the moment she takes to the stage – for tearing up a photo of the Pope on *Saturday Night Live* a couple of weeks before – she halts the band's intro to I Believe In You to perform an impromptu a cappella shout through Bob Marley's War. Even Neil Young appeared slick as a Vegas dinner show following that. *Jason Draper*

Stan Getz Quartet Live At Montreux 1972

★★★★★

Eagle Rock EE 392689

A fearsome fusion foursome As he reveals in his sleeve notes to this previously unreleased colour footage of the Stan

Getz Quartet at the 1972 Montreux Jazz Festival, Chick Corea – who was playing in the saxophone maestro's band back then – almost abandoned the piano for the drums in 1967; that was due to having to play horrendously out-of-tune pianos in jazz clubs. But it was the offer of a gig with Getz that changed Corea's mind and made him stay loyal to the keyboard.

After that first stint with the saxophonist, Corea went on to play with Miles Davis, and then, in 1972, signed up for a second spell with Getz. Corea brought with him former Davis drummer Tony Williams and the young, soon-to-be Return To Forever bassist Stanley Clarke. As this superb DVD proves, they helped Getz's music change direction towards a harder fusion sound, and together they made some incredible music. Tony Williams' propulsive polyrhythms injected it with an incisive cutting edge, especially evident on the Hispanic-influenced Captain Marvel and La Fiesta. Even so, the saxophonist hadn't abandoned the lyricism that became his hallmark, as a brilliantly burnished rendering of Lush Life demonstrates. *Charles Waring*

Rufus Wainwright Live From The Artists Den

★★★★

Artists Den, cat no tbc

Not quite what the congregation got

"The venue dictates everything." This quote from Rufus opens a brief interview sequenced before the main performance. As he stands in dark sunglasses and gold leggings, smack in the middle of the Church Of The Ascension in New York, it's clear the statement is accurate. In reality, all churches look the same once pop stars get inside them, but the human voice – around which such venues are centred – is key. Luckily, Rufus has a belter.

Trouble is, though, backed by ultra-accomplished but rarely freestyling musicians, his voice dominates so much as to become devoid of its intonation or variety. Once the pitch – never wavering, always at the same precise vibrato that can annoy and enchant in equal measure – takes hold, you crave

mistake-filled sound that only really comes on the solo numbers towards the end.

When Rufus is seated at the piano or strung behind an acoustic guitar things improve, particularly on a welcome sax-tinged Going To A Town, or the pin-drop brilliant The Art Teacher. Ultimately, however, the show feels one-dimensional and can't compare to what it must've been like to be there in the pews. *Jake Kennedy*

The Big Melt Martin Wallace & Jarvis Cocker

★★★★

BFI BFVID 999

Steel-crazy, after all these years

Like having British Sea Power soundtrack the BFI's *From The Sea To The Land Beyond*, conscripting hometown hero Jarvis Cocker to score this paean to Steel City was a no-brainer. Welded together from vintage BFI footage stretching as far back as 1900, *The Big Melt* is a celebration of Sheffield's industrial past – and of those who grew up with it.

Footage of couples ballroom dancing is juxtaposed with workers gliding around the mill; there's art and discipline to both, but there's also another implication: the hard toil results in making everything in daily life possible; the very roof above the dancers' heads is held up by steel. Cutlery, door handles, pylons, the magnets in a radio – they're all steel. One of the most enduring images is of workers climbing around the frame of the New Tyne Bridge as it undergoes construction in the 20s.

Jarvis' score is also a hymn to his hometown, referencing its brass-band history, John Cameron's wistful soundtrack to *Kes*, and Sheffield's celebrated synth-pop groups. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the most "Pulp" music is reserved for footage of pub revellers, and a guy and a girl meeting on a hillside for some how's-your-father.

Fittingly, the string arrangement from Pulp's *This Is Hardcore* brings the closing footage – of steel being cast – to a climax, without over-sentimentalising the hard lives many of these workers endured. Like the material itself, the human spirit is durable – and makes



Flame on: Jarvis orchestrates *The Big Melt*