

DEJA RE-VU

Pop Culture Classics' Recommended CDs, DVDs and Books

By Paul Freeman

DVDs

"SUZANNE VEGA LIVE: SOLITUDE STANDING"

This compelling performance, recorded at Rome Auditorium in 2003, is a fascinating glimpse into Vega's full artistic soul. Backed only by a bassist, Vega instantly creates a beautifully intimate atmosphere in which to unveil her intriguing song-stories. In addition to performing many of her riveting songs, she recites several poems, which are translated into Italian by fellow singer-songwriter Valerio Piccolo. A bonus feature presents a conversation between Vega and Piccolo. Musical highlights include "Marlene On The Wall," the eloquently sensual "Small Blue Thing," the deeply moving "Penitent," a delicate "Gypsy," "Luka," of course, provides another emotionally powerful moment. Her vocals are soft, sensitive and supple. Whether expressing herself through song or poetry, there is never an untrue moment in Vega's work. Her compositions will haunt you.

"TORMENT"

In this 2013 horror film, when a wilderness vacation goes terribly wrong, a resilient couple (Katharine Isabelle, of "Ginger Snaps" fame, and Robin Dunne) tries to rescue the husband's seven-year-old son (Peter DaCunha) from a family of sadistic maniacs. Veteran character actor Stephen McHattie can be seen briefly in a supporting role. Director Jordan Barker has adeptly elicited convincing performances from the entire cast throughout this fast-moving, nail-biting, 90-minute suspense flick.

"FOR THE LOVE OF THE MUSIC: THE CLUB 47 FOLK REVIVAL"

In the wake of "Inside Llewyn Davis," there should be renewed interest in the rise of 50s and 60s folk music. This fascinating documentary focuses on one of the genre's hotbeds, Cambridge Massachusetts' Club 47, 1958-68. With narration by Peter Coyote, the film tells how this university town's little coffeehouse made a lasting impact on the nation's music scene. While struggling to survive financially, Club 47 introduced many major artists and became a home for young civil rights and anti-war activists. Offering insightful anecdotes are such Club 47 performers as Judy Collins, Joan Baez, Taj Mahal, Jim Kweskin, Geoff and Maria Muldaur, Peter Rowan and Tom Rush, as well as author Joyce Chopra, who was one of the founders of the club during her college student days. A sense of family was created at Club 47. People played for the love of the music. And they learned from blues legends and bluegrass greats. We travel through the evolution from trad folk to the singer-songwriter era. The doc includes audio of two unreleased Bob Dylan performances, which had been recorded live at the Club. In conjunction with the DVD/Blu-Ray release (which includes bonus interviews), a CD with music from the movie has also been issued. Among the featured artists are Tom Rush, Jim Rooney and Rowan. Additional recordings "in the spirit of Club 47," are included. Tracks by contemporary artists Meg Hutchinson and Antje Duvekot, Tripping Lily, teen Hayley Reardon and Red Heart The Ticker prove that folk music is still alive and well, thank you very much. One of the highlights of the documentary comes when the older artists perform with some of these modern counterparts. Downloads of the film and CD are available, as well. Visit www.loveofthemusic.com.



"COUNTESS DRACULA"

The fountain of youth? Perhaps the eternal search ends at the jugular of beautiful young women. Countess Dracula finds it to be quite a tasty rejuvenation solution. Milk baths are excellent for the skin. But blood baths? Sensational! Unfortunately, the ancient anti-aging formula works only briefly. Afterwards, the user winds up looking like an even older, uglier crone. Fortunately for gothic horror fans, the Countess is responsible for buckets of blood and ample, bouncing bare breasts along the way. Shockingly, the story is based on a real-life Medieval villainess, Hungarian Countess Elizabeth Bathory. The sensuously sordid proceedings benefit from sumptuous and stately sets and costumes). The 1971 Hammer picture looks great in its new Blu Ray release from Synapse Films. The luscious Ingrid Pitt ("The Wicker Man," "Where Eagles Dare," "Vampire Lovers") stars at the lustful, evil Countess. It's a tour-de-force performance (though her dialogue was unnecessarily dubbed to eliminate her accent). The exquisite Lesley Anne-Down, in one of her earliest screen appearances, plays the Countess' ingenuous daughter. Director Peter Sarsy draws uniformly capable performances from his cast, which includes the notable Nigel Green. Pitt figures prominently in the interesting extras, including a fascinating featurette on her life and career, an audio

interview and commentary track (with Sarsy and the screenwriter also participating). The set comes with a DVD disc of the film, as well.

"LOST EMPIRE"

The long-lost 1983 futuristic fantasy adventure movie launched director Jim Wynorski's prolific B-movie (to be generous) career. His directorial debut came after a mentorship from "King of the B's," Roger Corman. "Lost Empire" is cheesy fun, as Wynorski's imaginative filmmaking compensates for the meager budget. Dr. Sin Do (Angus Scrimm, of "Phantasm" infamy) has made a deal with the devil and now just needs to hunt down ancient magical jewels, the Eyes of Avatar, and he will hold supremely destructive power. Battling the demonic doctor are such beautiful babes as Melanie Vincz and Raven de la Croix. Such attractions as catfights, ninjas, robot spiders and plenty of skin will distract viewers from the increasingly ridiculous plot and cornball dialogue. It's colossally camp. Don't miss Wynorski's entertaining commentary track. MVD Entertainment has also just released another of Jim Wynorski's cult classics, "Gila!" It's a take-off on the 1959 "Giant Gila Monster."

"CIVIL WAR 360"

Aired as a Smithsonian Channel miniseries, "Civil War 360" offers fresh, personal perspectives on the conflict. The first episode in the newly released DVD package focuses on the Union side. It's hosted by Ashley Judd, whose Kentucky ancestors donned blue uniforms. Episode two moves to the Confederacy and country star Trace Adkins recounts what his people might have been feeling as they marched into battle for the South. In the third episode, Dennis Haysbert explores those who were enslaved in the deep South during those horrendous times. Throughout, viewers have an opportunity to examine a remarkable array of artifacts from the era, housed at the Smithsonian Institute. The DVD also includes a bonus episode, "Lincoln's Washington at War."

Adam Sandler
Al Franken
Al Kooper
Alan Alda
Albert Hammond
Alice Cooper
Alvin Lee
Andy Summers
Ani DiFranco
Arnold Schwarzenegger
Art Clokey (creator of Gumby)
Art Garfunkel
Arthur Lee- Love
Ashford & Simpson
B-52's
Badly Drawn Boy
Barbara Mandrell
Barry Mann
Bay City Rollers
Berlin
Bert Jansch
Betty Buckley
Bjork Phillips
Bill Maher
Bill Medley
Bill Monroe
Bill Wyman
Billy Crystal
Billy Joel
Bjork
Blur
Bob Geldof
Bob Mould
Brendan Fraser
Brubeck Brothers
Bruce Hornsby
Bruce Willis
Buck Owens
Buggy Guy
Butch Trucks
Buzzcocks
Cameron Diaz
Carlene Carter
Carlos Santana
Carnie Wilson
Carole King
Cate Blanchett
Chevy Chase
Chicago
China Forbes
Chip Taylor
Chris Farley
Chris Hillman
Chris Isaak
Christie Hynde
Christian Slater
Christopher Eccleston
Christopher Reeve
Cinematic Titanic
Coldplay
Colin Blunstone
Collins Kids
Concrete Blonde
Corrs
Count V
Cowboy Junkies
Cranberries
Crystal Bernard
Cybill Shepherd
Cyndi Lauper
Dan Aykroyd
Danny DeVito
Dave Brubeck
Dave Clark
Dave Davies
Dave Mason
Dave Matthews
Dave Mustaine
David Cassidy
David Crosby
David Gates
David Grey
David LaFlamme
David Lee Roth
Dean Torrence
Dean Torrence
Debby Harry
Demi Moore
Depeche Mode
Devo
Dick Clark
Dick Dale
Dolly Parton
Don Everly
Dudley Moore
Duran Duran
Dwight Yoakum
Earl Klugh
Ed O'Neil
Eddie Money
Eddie Rabbitt
Elisabeth Shue

