



David Bowie: Under Review 1976-79 Berlin Trilogy
Pixies: loudQUIETload: A Film About the Pixies
The Harder They Come
Paul McCartney: The Space Within US

More often than not, critiquing rock 'n' roll is an exercise every bit as rewarding -- and essential -- as teaching table manners to orangutans. Why bother? Primates will be primates, and boys will be primates, too. Until they've been around the block a few times, almost no artist -- a word used far too generically these days -- can be expected to articulate what strange brew of creative stimuli, economic imperatives and inebriants resulted in their musical achievement. Pundits may hazard opinions, but, more often than not, the genesis has everything to do with getting laid and paid. All that really matters is that the music rocks.

That said, MVD's Under Review series has come as close to explaining what's made some of rock's most essential talents tick as any previous rockumentary or biography out there. Even though the producers were denied anything more than fair use snippets of songs and videos, they've gotten excellent material from former band members and sound engineers, veteran critics and archival media images (**David Bowie** joining **Bing Crosby** on *Little Drummer Boy*, for example). The latest installment closely focuses on the period of time when Bowie's music was at its most experimental, inventive and, to some of the writers, annoying. The series also has taken similarly intriguing portraits of **Syd Barrett**, **Captain Beefheart**, **Velvet Underground**, the **Who**, **Radiohead**, **Joy Division**, **Green Day**, **Nirvana**, **Queen** and **U2**.

Also from MVD comes **loudQUIETload**, a film that documents the 2004 reunion tour of the **Pixies**, an event savored by devotees of the band and hard-to-please critics, alike. Apart from the ferocity of the live presentation, the producers also effectively captured the awkwardness that derives from reversing the divorce process, if only for one brief, shining and commercially lucrative moment. Blackalicious: 4/20 Live in Seattle records hip-hoppers Gift of Gab and Chief Xcel in concert, along with the imaginatively named Lateef, Pigeon John, LifeSavas and Fat Lip. Blackalicious join **Los Lobos**, **Ozomatli**, **Fishbone** and **Chuck D** in the tribute-concert movie, **Look at All the Love We Found: Live: A Tribute to Sublime**. **Not a Photograph: The Mission of Burma Story** follows the post-punk Boston ensemble on its 2002 reunion tour.

In 1973, **Perry Henzell** introduced reggae music and Rastafarian culture to the world in **The Harder They Come**. Not only does the movie hold up 30 years later as a great entertainment, but it also remains one of the foremost examples of Third World cinema. Singer-turned-actor **Jimmy Cliff** played an aspiring reggae artist from the mountains of Jamaica, who, inspired by American Western outlaws, refuses to take crap from corrupt police, brutal ministers and greedy music moguls. The soundtrack features the music of Cliff, Toots and the Maytals, the Melodians, Desmond Dekker, the Slickers and Scotty, all of whom were essential figures in the Kingston reggae scene. The new edition of *The Harder They Come* has been re-mastered and comes with a making-of featurette, interviews, music video, slide show and soundtrack CD. MVD also recently sent out **Roots Daughters: The Women of Rastafari**, which describes how women around the world relate to the male-dominated Rasta culture to a background beat of reggae

music.

The Space Within US documents **Paul McCartney's** 2005 world tour, and adds material not shown in the A&E special. The songs are mostly familiar, which will make fans of both McCartney and the Beatles happy. Its hi-def look and sound are pretty swell, too. **Beatles** completists may also want to check out Kulture Video's Stuart Sutcliffe: The Lost Beatle. Sutcliffe was immortalized in Backbeat as the bassist who decided his love of art and German photographer **Astrid Kirchherr** superceded his patience for success as a Beatle.

The focus is on **Bob Dylan** and the Band in 1966 World Tour (The Home Movies), shot by drummer **Mickey Jones** at a time when the singer-songwriter was at his creative height. Previously released, it includes new interviews with **Charlie Daniels, Trini Lopez** and **Johnny Rivers**, among others. The breadth of the musical spectrum is represented, as well, by **William E. Jones' Is It Really So Strange?**, which takes a fans-eye view of Morrissey's cult appeal; The King of Polka: Jimmy Sturr Live, in which the multiple-Grammy-winner opens with a sample of Also Sprach Zarathustra; Piaf: Her Story, Her Songs, as recalled by French jazz singer and Piaf interpreter, Racquel Bitton; and The Who: The Vegas Job, taken from the one-off concert at the MGM Grand Hotel, in Las Vegas, on October 29th, 1999. - *Gary Dretzka*