



REGGAE SHOWDOWN VOL. 1: DENNIS BROWN LIVE AT REGGAE CANFEST

Cascade 60047

This disc also features performances by Lady Saw and Admiral Tippet, among others, but it's primarily a showcase for the late Dennis Brown, a genuine titan among

roots reggae singers, who died in 1999. (In 1975, no less an authority than Bob Marley declared Brown the world's best reggae singer.) This was the last show of his to be filmed, and he's in fine form, displaying the energy and showman's instincts that permitted him to record over 100 albums (and nearly twice that many

compilations). Brown's productivity was the result of nervousness over losing his market share to dancehall deejays in the '80s, but fans were obviously the ones to benefit from it. He died too soon, and is sorely missed, but this DVD is a terrific reminder of his glory.



REGGAE SHOWDOWN VOL. 2: GIANTS OF STING

Cascade 60048

Sting, in this case, refers not to a pretentious British bassist/singer, but to an annual reggae festival, operating since 1984. This DVD documents performances from

the 2002 edition, and features (among others) Vybz Kartel, Beenie Man, Buju Banton, Capleton, Sizzla, Elephant Man and Bounty Killer. The beats come fast and furious, the toasting smooth and upbeat or guttural and raucous, depending on the performer, and the audience goes wild for every hit single shouted from the stage. There's lit-

tle of the relaxed atmosphere older reggae fans might anticipate—this is a ferocious dancehall marathon, fatiguing even from the relative comfort of one's couch. It's not often that watching a concert DVD is better than actually being present at the event itself, but this may be the exception to that general rule.



SUPERSILENT 7

Rune Grammofon 2047

Supersilent are a Norwegian quartet: trumpeter/electronics guy Arve Henriksen, drummer Jarle Vespestad, keyboardist Ståle Storlækken, and "audio virus" electronics guy Helge Sten. Their music, whether in the studio or live (as on this

DVD), is moody, spacious and completely improvised, combining the feel of Miles Davis's early-'70s electronic jazz, Stockhausen's open-ended compositions and German group Einsturzende Neubauten's rattletrap approach to music construction. The performance on this DVD was filmed in Oslo, their first visit to that city in some years, and the line was

around the block. Shot in lush black and white, there are chapter breaks for each of the six untitled compositions, but no extras, no menus, no FBI warning or any other extraneous stuff—just brilliant, insinuating, unclassifiable music for slightly over an hour. Highly, highly recommended to any adventurous ear.

SENNHEISER CX300 EARPHONES

Everyone who's owned an iPod for more than a day knows that the earbuds you get with the thing are terrible. They're physically painful to keep wedged in your ear for longer than an hour or so, the sound is tinny and utterly lacking in low end, and...well, how many more reasons to swap 'em out do you need? These new Sennheisers are the best replacements to come down the pike yet. The sound is crystal-clear and full—play something with enough bass (Eric B. & Rakim's "Follow The Leader," say) and you could wind up with a migraine—and the rubber inserts (in three different sizes) allow you to maintain a reasonable volume while still blocking out almost all street noise. They may initially seem a little pricey, but if you're rocking a \$400 music player, what's another \$70 for sound this astonishing? **[\$69.95]**



GLOBAL GEAR

COMPILED BY:
Phil Freeman

180S JVC EARWARMERS

Of course, the big disadvantage earbuds have, when compared to traditional headphones, is that they leave your whole ear exposed to the elements. If you happen to live in a bitterly cold or excessively windy region, this can be a real problem. The Earwarmers, from 180s and featuring audio technology from JVC, presents an ideal solution: a set of quite high-quality, clear-sounding headphones surrounded by ultra-soft fleece. They're windproof, water resistant and toasty warm, allowing you to blast your tunes as you carom down the slopes or just march, head down, through the wind-blasted concrete canyons of Manhattan. The cord is only about seven feet long, not enough to let you really whip your head around or comfortably keep your playback device in, say, a cargo pants thigh pocket. But they're toasty warm! **[\$60.00]**



GENEVA SOUND SYSTEM MODEL XL

And finally, if you're not planning on leaving the house at all, and have tons of surplus cash cluttering up the place, you can pre-order the incredibly cool-looking XL sound system (it's not commercially available yet). Completely self-contained, it's got a CD player, an FM radio and an iPod dock. Oh, and then there's the output: two 1-inch tweeters, two 5-inch woofers, and two 8-inch subwoofers. This thing will move small objects off your bookshelves. There's a separately available stand that lifts it a foot or so off the ground, the better to fill the room with thundering waves of bass without shaking your downstairs neighbor's ceiling too much. And it comes in three colors: white, black or red. Place your order today. You'll be cranking the sound up before you know it. **[\$1,075.00]**

