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**As the Disc Spins - Volume 1, Issue 10****Miles Davis, Nanci Griffith, and the Spencer Davis Group**

by Lindsay Planer

As promised a few weeks back, we have details on a handful of music-related home video titles. Several of these have never been available stateside in any format, and even those that have are making their first appearance anywhere on DVD.

**Miles Davis — *The Cool Jazz Sound* (EFOR Films)**

This is one of the volumes in the Stars of Jazz Collection from Music Video Distributors. While other entries in the series spotlight luminaries such as Billie Holiday, Nat "King" Cole, Duke Ellington, Lester Young, Charlie Parker & Dizzy Gillespie, Count Basie, B.B. King and Keith Jarrett, the Miles Davis entry caught my eyes and ears not only because of what is played, but more so by who is playing it. Captured alongside John Coltrane (tenor sax/alto sax), Wynton Kelly (piano), Paul Chambers (bass) and Jimmy Cobb (drums) on CBS' Robert Herridge Theater Show on April 02, 1959, Davis' (flugelhorn/trumpet) infamous 'great quintet' is further augmented by Gil Evans (arranger/conductor) and his 15-piece orchestra.

The set consists of a quartet of tunes, including cover versions of Dave Brubeck's "The Duke" and Ahmad Jamal's "New Rhumba," separated by Gil Evans' own "Blues For Pablo." While those three cuts had by then surfaced on the legendary *Miles Ahead* (1957), the opening number "So What" is likely making its debut, seeing as it would be several months before the genre-defining *Kind Of Blue* (1959) album would be released. When juxtaposed against Davis' former work, even casual enthusiasts will notice the contrasted difference between the new 'modal' approach that Davis and Evans take the quintet through during "So What." I'd be remiss not to mention Coltrane's solo, as it offers a seminal example of the unique energy he brought to the combo. The sound and video quality are typical of 1959 and, even though the entire show clocks in at under half an hour, for many it could be considered one of the most important multi-media documents in the history of recorded jazz.

**Nanci Griffith — *One Fair Summer Evening ... Plus!* (MCA Nashville/Universal Chronicles)**

After being out-of-print for a number of years, this Nanci Griffith performance — filmed during her 1988 *Little Love Affairs* tour — has finally been transferred onto DVD, having been significantly upgraded and augmented in the process.

The concert-length live show finds Griffith (guitar/vocals) returning to her native stomping grounds, supported by James Hooker (keyboards) and Denny Bixby (bass). The cozy confines of the legendary Anderson Fair in Houston, Texas is an ideal setting for intimate interpretations of "Once In A Very Blue Moon," an absolutely breathtaking "More Than A Whisper," "Love At The Five And Dime," "Deadwood, South Dakota," "I Would Bring You Ireland" and a wistful reading of "There's A Light Beyond These Woods (Mary Margaret)." Interestingly, there are several notable discrepancies between this DVD and the CD version, which is also called *One Fair Summer Evening* (1988). The audio disc doesn't include

"There's A Light Beyond These Woods (Mary Margaret)" or the encore "Wichita Falls Waltz," while the video lacks "Roseville Fair," "Trouble In The Fields" and "The Wing And The Wheel."

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The DVD also includes MTV-style promotional films for "I Knew Love" — from the aforementioned **Little Love Affairs** — "It's A Hard Life Where Ever You Go" and "I Don't Want To Talk About Love," both off the **Storms** (1989) album. The title track from Griffith's **Late Night Grande Hotel** (1991) is here, as well as a cover of fellow-Texan Buddy Holly's "Well...All Right," that was featured on the all-star tribute **Not Fade Away (Remembering Buddy Holly)** (1996). The entire package is offered in either Dolby 2.0 Stereo or an extremely life-like 5.1 Surround Sound. The latter option will give your living room the feel of the best seat in the house, further making **One Fair Summer Evening ... Plus!** an essential, if not compulsory, experience for every generation of Griffith fan.

**Spencer Davis Group — Gimme Some Lovin': Live 1966** (Music Video Distributors/Cherry Red Records)

This collection captures the Spencer Davis Group at a pivotal point in their history. For starters, there are several live performances by the original quartet with siblings Steve Winwood (keyboard/vocals) and Muff Winwood (bass/vocals), as well as Pete York (drums) and Davis (rhythm guitar) from a Finnish television appearance in 1966. The second program on the DVD is the 40-minute documentary, *With Their New Face On*, made by and broadcast on German TV right after the brothers Winwood departed and Phil Sawyer (guitar) and Eddie Hardin (keyboards) stepped in to keep the combo afloat. One major distraction here is the copious use of subtitles, as they accompany the spoken introductions, interviews and every line of each song. The short set of "When I Come Home," "Dust My Blues" — which is the sole selection with Davis on lead vocal — "Mean Woman Blues," "Together Till the End of Time," "I'm a Man," "Georgia on My Mind," "Gimme Some Lovin'" and "Keep on Running" shows off the new incarnation at their blue-eyed, soulful best.

Particularly fascinating in the brief interview segment is how, even at such a tender age (Steve Winwood was only 19 at the time), it's clear that the band is deeply into and influenced by traditional American blues and Appalachian mountain music. *With Their New Face On* is especially interesting in the wake of the band's short-lived second line-up, as Sawyer split in less than a year. The footage from the recording studio features a few glimpses of other rock royalty, as Jimi Hendrix Experience's Mitch Mitchell and The Rolling Stones' own Mick Jagger happen to be wandering through while cameras are rolling.

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*Lindsay Planer is a freelance journalist and Public Radio host. He is a regular contributor to several publications, including All Music Guide and CrutchfieldAdvisor.com.*

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