

MUSIC

What links 'Electric Company,' 'Tomorrow'?

It's been far too long since this column perused the DVD isles. So, this week let's do just that with a trio of recent arrivals. First up, a new documentary on Pink Floyd co-founder Syd Barrett and then a pair of multi-disc packages featuring vintage and timeless television shows that have not been seen in decades.



LINDSAY PLANER

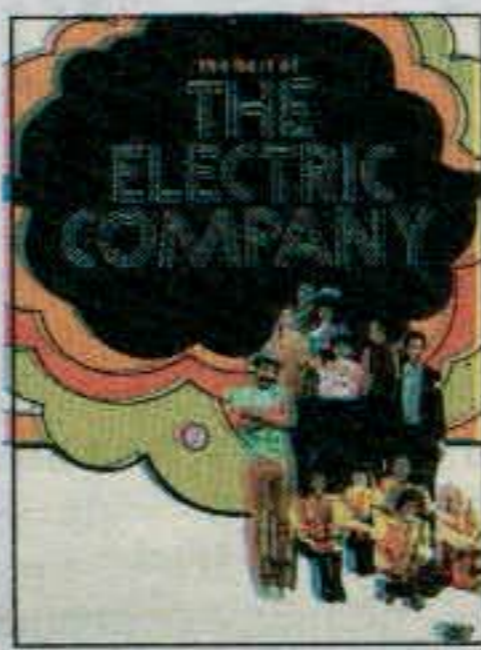
As the disc spins

have not been seen in decades.

Syd Barrett — "Under Review" (Chrome Dreams/MVD)

For starters, it is important to note that "Under Review" is wholly unauthorized by the artist. That said, this hour-long biopic does offer various opinions and first-person insights into the misunderstood and often maligned life of Pink Floyd's initial instigator and psychedelic co-conspirator, Syd Barrett. The vast majority of the program is drawn from modern interviews with noted English rock journalist Chris Welch, Barrett biographer David Parker, Nigel Williamson from *Uncut* magazine and fellow musician Hugh Hopper, formerly of the exceedingly influential *Soft Machine*.

Between the recollections and commentaries are brief snippets of extremely rare video footage of the original Pink Floyd. While none are complete, submitted for the viewer's approval are a host of archival clips. These highlights include scenes lifted from the promotional film [read: music



video] for Pink Floyd's "See Emily Play," as well as Pink Floyd's Nov. 6, 1967 Stateside appearance on (of all things) "American Bandstand."

"The Best Of The Electric Company" (Shout! Factory)

Without "The Electric Company," you might not be reading these words right now. OK, that might be a bit of an exaggeration. But what is certain is that your humble columnist undoubtedly enhanced his reading skills on a daily basis by simply watching the show. More importantly, it taught an entire generation to have fun, while learning to love and respect the written word. During its fruitful 11-year run (1971-81) on PBS, it is estimated that one out of every three elementary schools in the U.S. were tuning in, turning their students on and probably preventing many kids from dropping out.

A combination of factors made the show undeniably exciting. There was the practically frenetic pacing, with nary a dull moment on the screen. When you add to that the top-shelf talent, you get some unquestionably innovative techniques used to phonetically educate — all the while remaining entertaining for kids of any

age. Sadly, after the show was cancelled, "The Electric Company" was not re-broadcast and until recently remained a vague memory to its original audience. All that has thankfully changed as Shout! Factory has joined forces with the original creators from the Children's Television Workshop to resurrect more than 10 hours of classic "Electric Company" onto four DVDs.

The regular cast included an array of veteran performers — most notably Bill Cosby and Rita Moreno — alongside a few soon-to-be stars such as Oscar winner Morgan Freeman — whose portrayal of EZ Reader and disc jockey Mel Mounds were indelibly stamped on many a young psyche. As were the guest appearances — in the form of voice-overs during animated segments — from the likes of Joan Rivers and Mel Brooks, who was more often than not the foil for a written or visual practical joke. And who could forget musical satirist Tom Lehrer's surreal razzamatazz for the song "Silent E."

"The Tomorrow Show with Tom Snyder: Punk & New Wave" (Shout! Factory)

In many ways, Tom Snyder's "Tomorrow" set the table for the plethora of talk fodder that

currently gluts the late night television landscape. "Tomorrow" offered a wide spectrum of guests. The famous, the infamous and the unknown alike were given a platform to discuss practically every topic under the sun. This included musicians of every genre and taste. The audio-visual archivists at Shout! Factory have scored a major league coup with their acquisition of vintage "Tomorrow" telecasts from the 1970s and '80s. The first volume — in what one can only hope will be a long running reissue series — contains eight full-length programs covering the then-burgeoning punk scene. More often than not, this was the initial exposure that viewers had to some of the most influential musicians of the day.

This double DVD set boasts nearly five hours of music and conversation with the likes of Elvis Costello & The Attractions, Iggy Pop, The Plasmatics, The Jam and with fill-in host Kelly Lange, The Ramones. There are likewise a trio of non-musical shows with Patti Smith, John "Johnny Rotten" Lydon and a roundtable discussion of the punk/new wave revolution with industry insiders Bill Graham, Kim Fowley, critic Robert Hilburn and artists Paul Weller from The Jam and Joan Jett of the Runaways.

Lindsay Planer is a local freelance music journalist and regular contributor to *All Music Guide* (allmusic.com), *All Movie Guide* (allmovie.com), *Crutchfield Advisor* (crutchfieldadvisor.com) and *Music Tap* (musictap.net). He can be reached at asthediscspins@earthlink.net.



SHeDAISY sisters finding a home on the road

By RONNA RUBIN
Great American Country

"So much of what we do as artists isn't about music," SHeDAISY's Kristyn Osborne says. "But when we get to drive down Briley Parkway and hop off the Opry exit, we know we are about to get a swift kick in the butt to remind us why we decided to be country singers in the first place. What an honor it is and what an indelible memory as sisters will al-

and Kelsi once again take to the Opry stage on Great American Country's "Grand Ole Opry Live," Saturday at 8 p.m.

While they respect and revere all that is traditional about the Opry, as country music recording artists they are breaking from tradition a bit on their soon-to-be-released fourth LP, "Fortuneteller's Melody," a project that paired them with producer John Shanks. Until now, Shanks has been best

John as a songwriting partner for about three years and it just seemed like a natural evolution in our relationship," Osborne said.

"There is a kinship we have never experienced before in a collaborator. John's musical sensibilities lean more on the pure, rootsy side ... his influences are really as relevant in our format as anything right now."

While middle sister Kassidy handles lead vocal duties and