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> The Endless Possibility Of Sky (Water Bearer DVD)/Face 2 Face (Wolfe DVD, both 2012)

IN STORES NOW

Paul Anka: Live In Switzerland (2011/Inakustik/Naxos Blu-ray)/**Neil Cowley Trio: Live At Montreux 2012** (Eagle Blu-ray)/**Last Shop Standing: The Rise, Fall & Rebirth Of The Independent Record Store** (2013/Convexe/Blue Hippo Media/MVD DVD)/**Alanis Morissette: Live At Montreux 2012** (Eagle Blu-ray)

Picture: B-/B-/C+/B- Sound: B/B-/C/B Extras: C-/C-/B-/C- Main Programs: C+/B-/B-/C+

Now for the latest music releases...

A recent 2011 recording, **Paul Anka: Live In Switzerland** shows the longtime enduring vocalist still attracting large crowds everywhere. The singer, child singing star, songwriter and veteran recently gained some attention for a dispute (which he won) over a song he wrote with Michael Jackson and the recording released posthumously. No performance of that song here, but his 25-song set includes *Diana*, *Mack The Knife*, *My Way* (twice!), *Lonely Boy*, *Proud Mary*, *Puppy Love*, *She's A Lady*, the *Theme from Martin Scorsese's New York, New York* and even a swing version of Van Halen's hit *Jump!*

It is a mixed concert and though Anka is giving his best efforts, some of the songs do not work out as well as others. Still, he is great with the crowd and fans will get a kick out of it as much as anyone. I found it decent, but not the best work overall from him, but still serviceable and not bad for the twilight of his long enduring career.

An 8-page booklet with illustrations and text is the only extra.

Neil Cowley Trio: Live At Montreux 2012 fares better with 15 tracks with a string ensemble and material I had really never heard before, but it is a fine, solid, 105 minutes show that Jazz fans will especially love and is not badly recorded, though not up to the fidelity I usually get from the genre. The musicians can certainly play, but the show as a whole did not always stick with me.

On the other hand, the band has energy and chemistry, which I cannot say about most bands of any kind these days and the show is never boring as a result. Still, unless you really like Jazz and this kind of jazz, you might have the mixed response I did. I would like to hear more from them though and this is a decent introduction to them.

A paper pullout with illustrations and text is the only extra.



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 > *The Sorcerer & The White Snake* (2011/aka The Emperor & The White Snake/Magnolia/Magnet Blu-ray)
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 > *Major Dundee* (1965/Columbia/Sony/Twilight Time Limited Edition Blu-ray)/*Maverick: The Complete Second Season* (1958 – 1959/Warner DVDs)
 > *Ghost Hunters – Season 8, Part 1* (2012/Image Entertainment DVD)
 > *Hey Good Lookin'* (1982/Warner Archive DVD)
 > *Roy Clarke's Last Of The Summer Wine – Vintage 1997* (BBC DVD)
 > *Philo Vance Murder Case Collection* (1930 – 1940/MGM/First National/Warner Archive DVD set)

Pip Piper's **Last Shop Standing** (2013) is an hour-long look at independent record stores and how they started as a big part of music in the 1950s to the 1980s before the major record labels went too corporate, bet their whole future on the now-old CD format and then watched downloading really shake up the industry for good. Though this is a sad, even ugly story (especially ironic when once-music based chains like Borders, Tower records and Virgin Megastore did not survive) about good people being trashed for technology and a quick buck.

However, the twist here is that this documentary focuses strictly on indie stores in the U.K. and is loaded with great interviews with dozens of store owners all over the place. There are also former executives, musicians and other experts weighing in as we see how these stores were key to music becoming so important and big in the first place, how the industry tried to forget its past in the process of going CD and catering to the lowest common denominator and how they could not kill vinyl in the long run.

I would love to see a U.S. or even Australian version of this and wish it were longer, but this is a key documentary for all serious music fans and lovers (based on the book by Graham Jones, which I want to read now) and is one of the most important music video releases we will see all year.

Extras are a big plus and include extended interviews with six of the main subjects, an Original Theatrical Trailer, Rebirth (continued) and fun Shop Talk clip.

Finally we have **Alanis Morissette: Live At Montreux 2012** but like a George Michael concert on Blu-ray I was unhappy with a few years ago, she is only so live when she keeps expecting the audience to sing the lyrics to more than a few of her songs throughout the 20-track, 98 minutes show where her singing is not always 100% (the occasional whining is not singing, nor is not completing lyric lines) as she walks almost non-stop from one side of the stage to the other for almost the entire show!

She still has the voice and when she does sing, she sounds good, but this is a very inconsistent show and despite the audience trying to join in, it is not a great show and I was disappointed. To imagine she was being touted as the biggest female vocalist since Whitney Houston then songs like *Thank U* sunk her, what a shame. We also get *Ironic*, *You Learn*, *Hand In My Pocket* and of course, *You Oughta Know*. She ought to know this should have been better.

A paper pullout with illustrations and text is the only extra.

The 1080p 1.78 X 1 digital High Definition image transfer on **Anka** should have been the visual champ here, but it is too dark too often and lighting can be mixed, so the 1080i 1.78 X 1 digital High Definition images on the two **Montreux** Blu-rays can more than compete despite their softness and detail issues. All have some motion blur. The anamorphically enhanced 1.78 X 1 image on **Standing** does not look bad, but cannot compete with the concerts. Still, I liked the editing and the way it was shot, so maybe a Blu-ray should get issued.

The DTS-HD MA (Master Audio) 5.1 lossless mixes on the three Blu-rays are warm and save Trio, have great solid, consistent soundfields. All are well recorded, but I give the Anka and Alanis Blu the edge. They also all have PCM 2.0 Stereo alternate tracks that are not bad, but Alanis has slightly better PCM 96/24. The lossy Dolby Digital Surround 2.0 mix on **Standing** is interview, talk and dialogue based, so it is only going to be so active, but it has more bass throughout than it needed and can be louder than it should be as a result.

- Nicholas Sheffo

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