

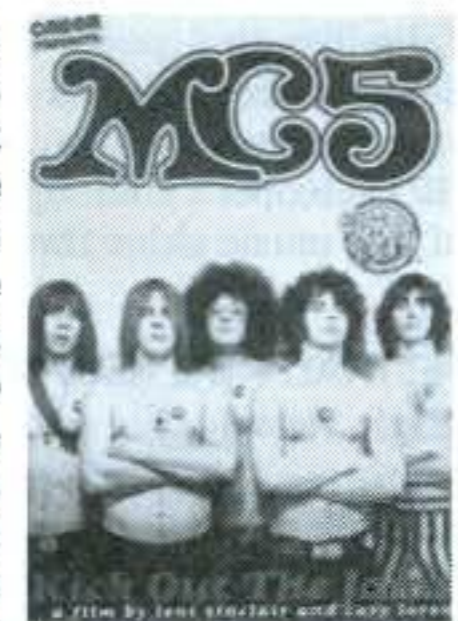
The very discordance of the more awkward passages in Francis Scott Key's lyric—or, rather, where those words would fall, metrically—becomes a weird refraction for Hendrix's outbursts, timed to the song's extreme jingoistic boasts. In a world where political hopefuls have to be ever mindful of fastening a flag pin to the lapel so as not to jeopardize favor, one could forgivably wonder how this music hasn't been configured—or marketed—as the hip hop that really matters—for the agit-propers, the peace lovers, even the war-mongers.



Of course, genre does not exist in the world of this solo, a world of "volk"/metal protest music, all stylistic demarcations blurred, until—come the final notes—one realizes that a new form of narrative has been fashioned. I'd make the case that it's a narrative of assembly and collage, *Guernica* for the guitar, with traces—or allusions that one might project—to common materials: the protest song, spirituals, rags, "The Train Kept A-Rollin," surrealism—all being lent to a work that doesn't so much as critique its own time as reveal it; and then scorns it in doing so. Visually, the entire film is striking; Hendrix and his Stratocaster have a combined, lumped identity—notes are conjured in bouncing the instrument off the guitarist's leg and still perfectly controlled. Knocked as an unfocused performance elevated to legendary status by its central performance, have a fresh look for yourself and see what rot those judgments are, the accepted clichés having come down unfettered and unchallenged through the years. Art transcendent of country, society, the ethos of its time, or any time, must in some measure be true art's concern; art that loves and hates and breaks and creates at once, is true art's aspiration, its timelessness. And, politically speaking, whomever Hendrix's "Star Spangled Banner" spoke to at the tail end of the sixties, would be as appropriate an audience as whomever Dostoevsky was choosing to rail against in the 1860s, or whomever might fit accordingly now or in the future. Which is just one going concern with art of this scope. (Colin Fleming)

THE MC5 - Kick Out The Jams (Music Video Distributors)

So what do you do if you have a cache of old silent footage of one of the greatest bands in rock 'n' roll history? In the case of Leni Sinclair and her MC5 footage, set it to the soundtrack of live tracks and studio outtakes, throw in psychedelic lightshows for transitions, plus other vintage footage, and let 'er rip. And given that it's the MC5, rip it does. Sure, this isn't as good as seeing footage with real sound, but it's hard not to grin as the sounds of everything from "Kick Out the Jams" to "Black to Comm" to "The Pledge Song" blaze by as images of Wayne Kramer's stars 'n' stripes guitar, Rob Tyner's dancing, or a shirtless Dennis Thompson shaking behind the drums grace the screen.



Much of the footage is apparently of 1968-69 vintage, but there are also some extremely cool early 1966 color clips where the band is still sporting Beatle haircuts (like the cover of '66 *Breakout*). Com-

bined with footage of old protests, montages of vintage buttons and press clippings, and Vietnam War images, it plays like the MC5's history itself: chaotic and tumultuous, but somehow making sense in the end. Any fan will find a lot to like here.

As a "bonus," there's a 20-minute John Sinclair interview from 2003. The problem isn't that most of it is info well-known to the average fan; it's that—for whatever bizarre reason—a track of Sinclair reading poetry with musical accompaniment has been superimposed over the interview. Ostensibly inserted to be avant-garde, the poetic background merely renders much of the interview incomprehensible. But of course, it's not why one would buy the DVD anyway. (Doug Sheppard)

THE NEW YORK DOLLS - All Dolled Up (Music Video Distributors)

Incredible finds as they were, the existence of holy grails like the Velvet Underground's lost MGM sessions and the Shadows of Knight's 1966 live tapes was not inconceivable. Who, on the other hand, would have even dreamed that famed photographer Bob Gruen shot 40 hours of New York Dolls footage on one of the first home video cameras between 1973 and 1975? Or that the results would not only be solid visually, but sonically as well? If you still can't picture it, *All Dolled Up* will make you a believer.



This offers views of one of the most influential bands of the '70s not only onstage (and yes, the footage is incredible) at venues like Max's Kansas City, the Whisky A Go Go, and the Matrix in San Francisco, but also backstage, in photo sessions, being interviewed, and even checking their luggage at the airport (and getting some pretty strange looks in the process). There are revealing interview clips of the band on a grassy hillside in Hollywood in 1973, shots of them shopping together, eating together, drinking and joking together, and hanging out together in general. Quite simply, this gets right to the heart of the Dolls—showing their inner workings, dynamics, and personalities. And it's able to offer this unique perspective because it traces history—specifically their summer 1973 tour of New York, Los Angeles, and San Francisco, plus some 1975 clips at the end—as it's happening, not 20 or 30 years after the fact.

The insights gained from *All Dolled Up* would be too numerous to list, but several stick out. For one, the Dolls were not the androgynous pretty boys they're often depicted as, but rather red-blooded Brooklyn boys who just happened to (as Gruen puts it) dress pretty (though not like girls). And did you realize that "Private World" was "inspired by the music of Cuba and Rio de Janeiro" (as David Johansen tells the Matrix crowd)? Or that Johansen (quoted from an interview) changed the lyrics to "Who Are the Mystery Girls?" every time they played it? Or that, in a revelation sure to make mainstream '70s rock critics apoplectic (but make this writer smile), Black Sabbath was Johansen's favorite band in 1973?

Mainly, however, it's quite clear that the Dolls didn't see themselves as outsiders destined for eternal cult status, as talk of attaining stardom manifests throughout, including Johansen's onstage pleas at Max's for people to buy the new "Trash" single so it can become an AM hit. Yet that apparently wasn't the view of the outside world. As vintage news reports from two New York TV stations (one featuring

a young Joel Siegel) reveal, the Dolls were indeed seen as a wilder, more violent, outrageous new spin on rock 'n' roll—as the reporters speak in appalled, slightly confused language not unlike the reception punk rock received in the late '70s.

Not that the Dolls didn't earn a few of those shocked glances. As history has revealed, they lived a hard and fast lifestyle that, while not entirely evident here, is witnessed in Arthur Kane. Following an attack by his girlfriend (not shown), Kane is seen in a non-performing role onstage in Los Angeles and San Francisco—sporting a hand/wrist cast as Peter Jordan fills in for him. Surprisingly, at this stage Johnny Thunders and Jerry Nolan—later notorious heroin addicts—seem like innocent young kids just having fun, which they probably were. But by the 1975 clips at the Little Hippodrome in New York City, the onstage body language conveys a band that's less enthusiastic, less optimistic, and more hardened by the realities of the rock 'n' roll lifestyle.

As if the 95-minute documentary weren't enough, *All Dolled Up* also includes bonuses like Handsome Dick Manitoba's revealing interview of Gruen, plus commentary tracks by Gruen, Sylvain Sylvain, and Johansen. In the end, *All Dolled Up* is not only the definitive Dolls documentary, it's probably as essential as the band's two albums. (Doug Sheppard)

THE SMALL FACES - Under Review: An Independent Critical Analysis

SYD BARRETT - Under Review (Sexy Intellectual/Chrome Dreams, UK; all regions) DVD

This new UK music documentary series may not live up to its claim to be "the ultimate review and critical analysis" of the artists in question, but each disc does provide an entertaining hour or so of material, mixing mostly familiar video footage with a procession of talking heads, mostly writers and "experts," rather than musicians, producers, engineers and others who might provide first-hand accounts of the events under scrutiny.

The Small Faces DVD trots out the same video clips fans have seen countless times before—*Dateline Diamonds*, *Beat Beat Beat*, *Colour Me Pop*, etc.—none in their entirety, as their singles discography is discussed by the likes of biographers Paolo Hewitt and John Hellier, '60s journalists Keith Altham and Chris Welch, *Uncut* editor Nigel Williamson and a bald bloke with a guitar who demonstrates a few of Marriott's more memorable riffs. Unsurprisingly there are no huge revelations, just a general consensus that the Small Faces were an underrated group, that Marriott and Lane were an inspired songwriting team and that their band's approach was quintessentially English. Chances are you already knew that, but if you're in need of a refresher course this is a pleasant enough 60 minutes or so.

The Syd Barrett DVD is somewhat more interesting. Williamson and Welch are here again, along a variety of biographers and journalists (including a writer from *Mojo* who was probably born the year *The Wall* came out, let alone *Piper* or *Madcap Laughs*), but the presence of the Soft Machine's Hugh Hopper (who played on the *Madcap Laughs* sessions) adds some eye-witness credibility to the proceedings, while Barrett biographer David Parker provides

