

FEATURES: SIGHTS & SOUNDS

Whew...

That, in a word, sums up the amazing onslaught of superb new video releases over the past couple of months as the music biz sharpens its sights on new DVD releases and probes more obscure artists for both vintage footage and original offerings. Consequently, even the most dedicated collector is served with a plethora of new releases that are beginning to rival their CD counterparts in terms of quantity and variety.

Fairport Convention are another band etched into Brit rock history, although their four decades of music-making haven't garnered them much more than a cult following...although it's a rabid following at that. *The 35th Anniversary Concert* (MVD/Secret Films) provides an apt catch-up for the uninitiated, but it will almost certainly be the band's true fans that will especially enjoy this eighteen-song synopsis of their career accomplishments. The Fairport chronology is littered with personnel changes (their alumni include Richard Thompson, Iain Matthews and the late great Sandy Denny), but the group's steadfast devotion to British folk tradition with a modern rock sensibility has made them a singular institution. This is especially true in live performance where their self-effacing humor and ability to wring both smiles and sentiment makes the Fairports a singular presence in the annals of British rock. *The 35th Anniversary Concert* brings those qualities to the fore with the inclusion of classics like "Matty Groves" and "Meet On the Ledge" and ample doses of the band's onstage affability. A bonus interview with principals Simon Nicol, Dave Pegg and relative newcomer Chris Leslie provides a discourse on the band's evolution and could be considered a primer for anyone looking for a quick catch-up.