

DVDs



Bob Dylan

The Unauthorized Documentaries

Highway 61 Entertainment

The fact that these three documentaries are together in a box set may amaze some. These all have been released in recent years by Joel Gilbert, whose obsession with Dylan borders on illness; he runs his own Dylan tribute band, and even looks something like Bob.

The films here ("1966 World Tour (The Home Movies)," "Bob Dylan: World Tours 1966-1974," and "Bob Dylan: 1975-1981 Rolling Thunder and the Gospel Years") do not actually include Bob Dylan – no interviews or performances. They also have some godawful edits and shots, and while some may feel cheated by that, it's not necessarily a bad thing.

The "World Tours 1966-1974" DVD shows Gilbert going to Woodstock to meet photographer Barry Feinstein, who photographed Dylan extensively through the era. We hear his recollections, and see a lot of his photos. It's interesting stuff, even if much of what he has to say is useless and even a little deranged. We also hear from Al Aronowitz about Dylan and the Beatles meeting.

"1966 World Tour (The Home Movies)" is arguably the best of the three, with "home" movies from tour drummer Mickey Jones (who later starred on the television series "Home Improvement"). There's nothing really fascinating, but his recollections are great, and interview extras added to the new version of the disc are excellent. Before joining Dylan's band, he was the drummer in Johnny Rivers' band, so we get a fine interview with one of rock's true unsung heroes. You'll also like Jones' talk with Charlie Daniels, who played on the Dylan records cut in Nashville. And Daniels

tells interesting stories about how they tried to cut down on bootlegging during that era.

"1975-1981 Rolling Thunder and the Gospel Years" is an exhausting four-hour look at that era. Yes, it's too much, but the highlights – like interviews with Hurricane Carter and Scarlett Rivera – are worthwhile. Rivera played violin and gave Dylan's band a unique sound on "Desire." It's also great to hear memories of the same events from folks like Ramblin' Jack Elliot and other members of Rolling Thunder. And, it's always a pleasure to hear the likes of Jerry Wexler talk about anything musical.

These are not for everyone, but they're very modestly priced, and if supplemented with Martin Scorsese's "No Direction Home" and the recently released expanded "Don't Look Back," they offer a fascinating study of a fascinating man. – JH



Frank Zappa

Classic Albums: Apostrophe (') and Over-Nite Sensation

Eagle Vision

Dweezil Zappa's recommendation for someone wanting to understand his father's music is to start with these two albums. "This is where you go to find every aspect of Frank's music squeezed into two perfectly formed records."

Featuring interviews with the eldest Zappa son, his mother, Gail, and siblings Moon and Ahmet, as well as personnel from these two albums and band members from earlier and later incarnations, this 90-minute DVD offers strong support for Dweezil's case.

As saxophonist/vocalist Napoleon Murphy Brock points out, Zappa's music (in keyboardist George Duke's words, "a category of his own") is still ahead of its time. But *Over-Nite Sensation*, released in 1973, and *Apostrophe (')*, from '74, were two of his most accessible outings

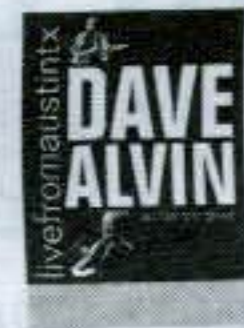
– featuring classics such as "Dirty Love," "Camarillo Brillo" and "Dinah Moe Humm" from the former, and "Cosmik Debris," "Nanook Rubs It" and "Don't Eat The Yellow Snow" from the latter.

Amazingly, these were the 16th and 17th albums by the prolific Zappa, since his Mothers Of Invention's 1966 debut, *Freak Out*. As Gail explains, "He was a composer who luckily was able, through rock and roll, to afford his habit, which was composing music" – something he was doing "all the time," according to multi-instrumentalist Ian Underwood.

Duke points out what a great blues guitarist Zappa was, and a clip of *Sensation's* "I Am The Slime" more than proves it. A later performance, from "Saturday Night Live" in 1976, is featured in its entirety as part of the bonus features, along with "Montana," taped at the Roxy in '73, and Dweezil's recent project, *Zappa Plays Zappa*, doing "Camarillo," with Brock on vocals.

Elsewhere in the bonus section, Dweezil uses the multi-tracks to deconstruct several songs, and he proves himself a guitarist worthy of his dad's legacy. After percussionist Ruth Underwood plays a particularly complex passage Frank wrote for her in "St. Alfonzo's Pancake Breakfast," Dweeze plays it on guitar and also duets with Steve Vai on "Peaches En Regalia."

True to Zappa's music, this DVD will make you smile one minute and make your jaw drop the next. – DF



Dave Alvin

Live From Austin, TX, Austin City Limits

New West Records

Dave Alvin says it's "all folk music" to him, and while that's true, his take on the various forms of American music make him one of modern music's more important interpreters and songwriters.



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