

Music on the Small Screen

By Kurt Brighton

Tim Buckley—My Fleeting House
MVD Entertainment

Most people are somewhat familiar, whether they know it or not, with Jeff Buckley. If for nothing else, you know him for his haunting cover of Leonard Cohen's "Hallelujah," which surfaces regularly in films and television shows. Less well-known is his equally talented father, Tim Buckley. Like his son, Buckley the elder also died in his late 20s after garnering critical praise and carving himself a singular path that had little to do with the business of the music business, and more to do with the art he wanted to create.

And although he is, to the general public anyway, one of the lesser-known figures of the late '60s and early '70s, Tim Buckley was an innovator of the first order whose sheer inspiration and genius can still be felt reverberating through hundreds of musicians who followed.

Buckley began as a folk troubadour, and many of his fans regard this period as the high point of his career. But his subsequent forays into jazz, soul, funk and what can only be described as avant-garde were extraordinary not only for the fact that he went to those places at all, but also because he did it so well. In *My Fleeting House*, the first-ever authorized collection of rare television appearances and interviews with Buckley and his contemporaries, one can see firsthand the simple honesty and sweetness that permeated his music, the sheer joy he took in pouring his soul into every phrase.

The appearances are presented in chronological order, and the time-capsule quality of the clips illustrates the weirdness of the age, as well as the weirdness of Buckley's place in it. For example, the first clip is "Song to the Siren" from his first-ever television performance—on "The Monkees."

Huh?

From that we go to a 1967 CBS show called *Inside Pop*, where the importance of Buckley and others' music was discussed by none other than Leonard Bernstein. Equally bizarre is a clip of the hopelessly square Steve Allen, decked out in a powder-blue suit and horn-rimmed glasses interviewing the wild-haired Buckley.

But the DVD is just as important in terms of not only its historical context, but also for the music, and Buckley's heartfelt, take-no-prisoners performances are universally stunning, his voice a golden klaxon of love and lust and simple joy.

If there is a God, father and son are singing duets in heaven.



