



Billie Holiday is featured on Volume 1 of the new DVD *Jazz Voice*.

Concert DVDs prime fans for jazz festival season

NEW RELEASES | Celebrated female singers strut their stuff

BY MARKE ANDREWS
VANCOUVER SUN

June marks the beginning of jazz festival season in Canada, and because no one can make every show that comes to their town, here are some concert DVDs you can watch to fill the void.

Legends of Jazz Showcase is a highlights package from the U.S. national television show originating from WTTW in Chicago and hosted by pianist Ramsey Lewis. All 13 performances by contemporary artists are things of beauty. Vocalists Kurt Elling and Al Jarreau perform a stirring rendition of the Dave Brubeck hit *Take Five*, and Brubeck himself shows up later to do a piano

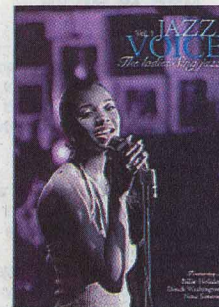


LEGENDS OF JAZZ SHOWCASE

Various Artists
LRS Media

★★★★★

duet with Billy Taylor. Flutist Dave Valentin provides showmanship as well as great musicianship on *Obsession*, and the grand old man of the trumpet, Clark Terry, pulls off some hilarious vocal nonsense on *Mumbles*.



JAZZ VOICE Vol. 1 & 2

Various Artists
Music Video Distributors

★★★★



JAZZ SHOTS FROM THE EAST COAST, Vol. 1

Various Artists
Music Video Distributors

★★★★

Other performers include singer-guitarist John Pizzarelli with singer Jane Monheit, saxophonists Benny Golson, David Sanborn and Phil Woods (the latter two in a duet), pianist Chick Corea and trumpeter Chris Botti. This terrific DVD comes with a CD of the music.

The two volumes of *Jazz Voice* bring us some of the most storied female singers of the genre in what appears to be mostly television performances, often in black-and-white. Volume 1 has a young-looking Billie Holiday and the haggard Billie of later years, who does a lovely *Fine and Mellow* and a stark, pained *Strange Fruit*. It's easy to forget that Nina Simone was also a fine piano player, which she shows here. Ethel Waters does one song, Anita O'Day does two, before the disc ends with a half-dozen tunes from one of my favourite singers, Dinah Washington.

Volume Two of *Jazz Voice* presents seven singers. This

is certainly not Ella Fitzgerald's best work, but it's hard to quibble with Sarah Vaughan's performance, especially on the ballad *Over the Rainbow*, where her mature voice can give a grown man chills. Carmen McRae shows she can entertain as well as sing, Lena Horne performs her signpost number *Stormy Weather*, and June Christy and Helen Humes also weigh in. The real showstopper on this disc is Peggy Lee, who comes across as the fox in the Glenn Miller henhouse.

Jazz Shots from the East Coast presents artists who range from the traditional Duke Ellington, whose band is dapper and tasteful, to an avant-garde performance by the Keith Jarrett quartet, featuring reeds player Charles Lloyd. A rare live performance by the Thelonious Monk Trio is a highlight, albeit a brief one; his rendition of *Blue Monk* is less than three minutes long.

Marke Andrews

THE VANCOUVER SUN
june 7, 2006
issue