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## Music, Laughter and Virtual Friends...

If you're anything like we are (and we seriously hope you aren't) you probably like to pretend that your life isn't as sad and lonely as it really is by throwing on a virtual friend, aka "DVD." This usually takes the shape of having either a comedian or a music act hanging out in your television for an hour or two.

You could go nuts, though, trying to sort through all the music and comedy releases out there, just to find the friend that fits just right. That's why we've done the work for you:

### MUSIC

**Nickelback Live at Sturgis 2006** is a title we talked about on the show, but it bears mentioning again. The KOCH Vision release comes in nice eco-packaging -- perfect for that save-the-earth rocker -- and features a dozen of the band's best tunes performed live before an audience of 35,000 (that's 35,000 virtual friends in your living room!). The bonus features include behind-the-scenes stuff with the band, which is cozy, but it's the songs themselves that make it worth watching, tracks like "Photograph," "Never Again" and that always-awesome "How You Remind Me."

**Jon Anderson: Tour of the Universe** isn't a concert DVD but what they call a "concept DVD." That means there's live stuff, recorded stuff, staged visual stuff, esoteric music video type stuff and other stuff you can't really explain. In short... it's as experimental and avant-garde as Anderson himself. If you're a fan of his work with Yes and Vangelis, you'll love it. If you're a fan of Yes and Vangelis... more than Anderson, per se... you won't like it so much. It is, however, very original and quite interesting. Good extras, too, which get into some interesting musicological theory.

**Portrait of Petula Clark** is a must buy for anyone who has even the foggiest idea who the hell Petula Clark is. And that's not being denigrating but rather acknowledging that the British '60s singing sensation ain't quite the headliner she used to be (she's 76 now). If you were a fan back in the day, well, get ready and sit back because this set of performances won't likely show up anywhere else on DVD. Ever. All of her favorite hits are here along with guests like Andy Williams and Ron Moody (in character as Fagin from "Oliver!" no less). Bonus material includes a new interview with Clark. Here's hoping this ignites a rediscovery. She's a gem.

**Engelbert Totally Amazing** gives you the great Arnold George Dorsey (his real name) in all of his sweaty, sexy, unbuttoned glory for such favorites as "After the Lovin'" and "Release Me" as well as terrific covers like "My Way" and "'S Wonderful." What can we say -- Engelbert rocks. If Tom Jones had shown up as a guest, we're afraid the DVD player would have sprouted hair.

**Rory Gallagher: Live in Cork** features a remarkable performance by the great Irish blues guitarist when he returned to his home town in 1987. Sadly, he died only eight years later, but his legend -- thanks to DVDs like this -- will live on. For serious Gallagher fans there's a supplementary "guide" to his life and memorabilia. Considering the original elements, very good picture and audio far improved over the previous VHS release.

**Jeff Beck - Performing This Week**, as long as we're on great guitarists, features Beck performing at Ronnie Scott's Jazz Club in London. Joss Stone and Eric Clapton are among the guests who pop in for a good time in Soho.

### LAUGHTER

**Craig Ferguson: A Wee Bit O'Revolution** may initially seem like, "Why bother? I can get him as a virtual friend any night of the week on his stupid talk show!" Yeah, but as great as Ferguson is as a talk show host... he's vastly superior as a stand-up comic. Plus, he gets to go a little raw here in ways TV would never allow. Shot live in Boston, this is classic Ferguson -- and if you've never seen him do live, you're in for a serious treat. Like that other great Scottish-born funnyman, Billy Connolly, his ability to extract comedy from the most unusual of places is exceptional. Originally aired -- albeit sanitized -- on Comedy Central.

**Ricky Gervais: Out of England - The Stand-Up Special** was Gervais' great HBO coming out, and it was -- and is spectacularly funny. If you're familiar with his TV work, particularly the original "The Office," you know that Gervais' brand of humor isn't broad or obvious, but once you get into his groove it's impossible to resist. If there was any question as to how talented Gervais is -- as a writer or a performer -- this special seals the deal. He's a treasure.

**Jim Caffigan: King Baby** cements Gaffigan's reputation as one of the great American comics of his generation. Sure, his schtick is a bit repetitive -- his odd rhetorical conversations in that whisper-voice and the emphasis on sloberry and food -- but it's FUNNY! And isn't that what counts? After all, how many other comics are as consistently amusing with as much new

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