

Music DVD Extravaganza

Eagle Vision Releases Historic DVDs

by Steve Matteo

One of the best ways that DVDs are bringing music into the visual medium in an illuminating and entertaining fashion is through the Classic Albums series from Eagle Vision. There have been a number of these documentaries that delve into the making of a classic album. Four from the series that are particularly appealing are *The Band* from the Band, *Rumours* from Fleetwood Mac, *Graceland* from Paul Simon and one that actually examines two albums, *Anthem To Beauty* and *American Beauty*, from the Grateful Dead. There are a number of other DVDs in this series also worth checking out.

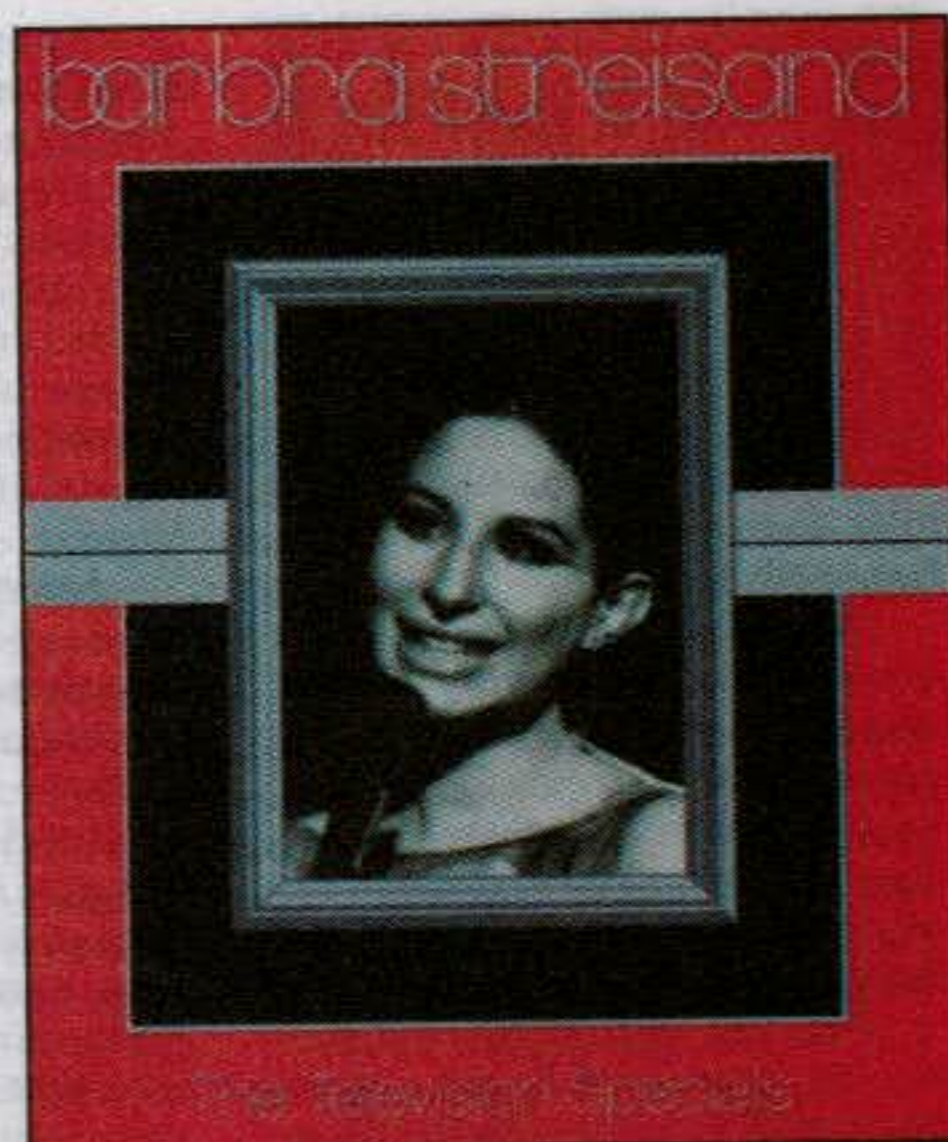
Of course, concert music DVDs played on the new home theater systems are bringing the concert experience to homes the same way they are bringing the movie-going experience to the home. *The Television Specials* (Warner) from Barbra Streisand is a five-DVD set of Streisand's television specials from 1965, 1966, 1967, 1968 and 1973. From the Who comes *Tommy and Quadrophenia Live* (Rhino) a three DVD set of *Tommy* and *Quadrophenia* in their entirety live, plus a third DVD of their greatest hits live.

Two DVDs with which Peter Gabriel was involved are truly amazing. The first is *Still Growing Up: Live*

& Unwrapped (Realworld), a live two-DVD set that includes a 2003 concert, a clip from his 2004 tour and another from his 1988 tour on the first disc, and on disc two, film and interview footage of his 2004 tour and additional extras from 2002 and live television appearances. The other Gabriel project is also a two-DVD set; it is entitled *Live 8 At Eden Africa Calling* (Realworld). The set includes live footage from the Cornwall, England, portion of last summer's Live 8 concerts and features a lineup that includes Thomas Mapfumo, Geoffrey Oryema, Angelique Kidjo and Dido, among many others. There is also the inclusion of a documentary film.

Another music DVD made by a true visionary is *The Dub Room Special!* (Eagle Vision) from the late Frank Zappa. The disc includes live performances from 1974 and 1981 and additional Zappa video insanity.

For more straightforward live concert DVDs check out *Let It Rock* (Eagle Vision) the 60th birthday concert, *Live By Request* (Arista) from Carlos Santana, a live performance from the A&E television series, *Live At Shoreline 9/1/90* (Rhino) from the Jerry Garcia Band, *Live In Perth* (Epic) from Ben Folds and *WASO and Live at the Hammersmith Odeon 1978* (Eagle Vision) from the Boomtown Rats.



Two live jazz DVDs worth searching out are *Live at Montreux 1986* (Eagle Vision) from George Benson, and from Duke Ellington, *Love You Madly/A Concert of Sacred Music At Grace Cathedral* (Eagle Vision), which includes interviews and performances from 1965 produced by Ralph J. Gleason.

Two very different feature films with a strong musical element came out on DVD that will liven up any collection. The first is the first-ever appearance of



the controversial film *The Committee* (Basho) from 1968 starring Paul Jones of Manfred Mann and featuring music from Pink Floyd and the Crazy World of Arthur Brown. The package also contains a CD of three songs, which includes a new version of the song "The Committee" from Jones. The other feature film, *9 Songs* (Tartan Video), is also British and even more controversial. The film views the love affair of a couple through the prism of nine performances from the likes of Franz Ferdinand, Elbow, Michael Nyman and many others. The film was one of the most controversial and explicit films of 2005 and is yet another provocative cinema experience from director Michael Winterbottom.

DVDs that are primarily documentaries but which also liberally mix in performance footage are also reviving musical visual programming on DVD. A documentary about a highly influential British band not to be missed is *Under Review* (Chrome Dreams), which is about the Small Faces. The mod foursome that originally included Steve Marriott, Ronnie Lane, Ian McLagan and Kenny Jones never really broke big in America. However, their influence, subsequent involvement with Jeff Beck, Ron Wood, Rod Stewart, Humble Pie, Peter Frampton, the Who, the Rolling Stones, as well as the special place they hold in the hearts of British music fans of a certain age makes for an amazing story.

Turning to American artists, *This Machine Kills Fascists* (Snapper) is a powerful documentary about Woody Guthrie, narrated by Billy Bragg and made with support from the Guthrie Foundation. Another powerful and thoughtfully produced documentary is

Be Here To Love Me (Palm), on the life of Townes Van Zandt. A two-DVD set, *Brian Wilson Presents Smile* (Rhino), includes one disc from 2004 entitled *Beautiful Dreamer*, which is a documentary on the making of the *Smile* album, as well as extras and one disc which contains a live performance of the album and other extras. A documentary DVD that mixes in an abundance of television performances is *California Dreamin' The Songs of The Mamas & The*

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Papas (Hip-O). *All Dolled Up* (MVD) is a documentary on the New York Dolls, which also includes 12 performances and plenty of extras.

As a follow-up to our column on recent CDs from artists who first came up in the 1960s, the following CDs also prove that many of those artists' new music still has an impact today. *Black Coffee* (Favored Nations) from Al Kooper is as good as anything Kooper has ever done and is an album that deserves some attention! Burt Bacharach just grows

more important in musical stature every day, as evidenced by *At This Time* (Columbia), his first truly solo album in years and one with surprisingly cutting political lyrics. *Waves: Great American Song Series Vol. 2* (Appleseed) from Eric Andersen is the second CD from the folk troubadour of classic folk songs from the great folk revival of the late 1950s and 1960s and yet another excellent Eric Andersen album of late. *Man Alive!* (Titan/Pyramid), from Steve Stills, is further proof of the power that Stills still possesses as a singer, a guitarist and a songwriter. Stills' bandmate in the short-lived group Manassas, Chris Hillman, out with his first album in four years, *The Other Side* (Sovereign Artists), mixes new songs with country and bluegrass-flavored reinterpretations of songs he did with such groups as the Byrds. *All That I Am* (Arista) from Carlos Santana continues Santana's album projects that feature various collaborations on most tracks. *Songs From The Gravel Road* (Vanguard) from Ian Tyson once again spotlights Tyson producing albums with a decidedly rural thematic framework as a base for his signature vocal style. The newest of the bunch, *This Old Road* (New West), from Kris Kristofferson is a stripped-down, gritty Don Was-produced outing that finds Kristofferson once again making some of the best music of his long career. Finally, don't miss Neil Diamond's surprising Rick Rubin-produced new album, *12 Songs* (Columbia). ♪

Steve Matteo is the author of *Dylan*, (Metrobooks) and *Let It Be* (Continuum).

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