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## BLUES

by Frank-John Hadley

### Visionaries On Stage

**Mark Naftalin's Blue Monday Party, Volumes 1 & 2 (Winner 222 DVD; 60:00) ★★★★★** Between 1979 and 1983, Monday nights at the Sleeping Lady Café in Fairfax, Calif., gave free reign to host Naftalin's enthusiasm for the blues. With cameras filming two half-hour "parties" for a 1981 television special, the former Paul Butterfield Blues Band pianist called on special guests to front his house band. Lowell Fulson, architect of the West Coast jazz-blues sound, is in sturdy voice and good form on guitar, though the draconian time limit doesn't allow him to hit his stride. Up next, singer Percy Mayfield brings grace and pathos to the lyrics of his signature piece, "Please Send Me Someone To Love," and two more vastly literate originals. Charlie Musslewhite blows his top playing harmonica on Sonny Boy Williamson's "Help Me" and Mose Allison's "Night Club" before giving way to dapper John Lee Hooker. After 15 minutes, Hooker's gone so far into the boogie he can only shout, "Can't think! Can't think!" Look for Chicago blues guitarist Luther Tucker and drummer Francis Clay.

Ordering info: [bluespower.com](http://bluespower.com)

**John Hammond: New Morning—The Paris Concert (Inak 6457 DVD; 126:00) ★★★★★** Performing two long sets on a single night in 2004, Hammond displayed such empathy with songs from the blues past and Tom Waits that his singing, guitar playing and harmonica work went beyond craft into a zone only he might begin to explain. The setting is ideal for self-rapture: He's fully at ease in the New Morning club, and the rapt audience consists of acoustic blues fanatics. Hammond discusses his life's mission in the 10-minute bonus feature.

Ordering info: [backporchrecords.com](http://backporchrecords.com)

**J.J. Cale: To Tulsa And Back—On Tour With J.J. Cale (Time Life 19255 DVD; 170:00) ★★★★★** German documentary maker Jörg Bundschuh successfully combines Cale's life story (before and after Eric Clapton's cover of "After Midnight" yanked him from obscurity) with a beautifully filmed travelogue on a 2004 concert bus tour of Colorado and Oklahoma. The

James Brown:  
hit parade  
on screen



unassuming, laid-back Oklahoman radiates charm recounting how "Cocaine" was written "in a Mose Allison bag" and, among other things, drawing inspiration from Billie Holiday singing behind the beat. For a supposed recluse, he's positively chatty. Clapton is one of several other articulate interviewees. Bonus: 70 minutes of additional talk and music.

Ordering info: [timelife.com](http://timelife.com)

**Canned Heat: Live At Montreux 1973 (Eagle Eye 39126 DVD; 73:00) ★★★** In the shadow of the Alps, Canned Heat was still staggering from harmonica player Alan Wilson's death in 1970. But manna from heaven came to the blues-rock band in the lanky form of guest Gatemouth Brown, whose incandescent vocals, guitar and fiddle turn four songs into revival meetings or "grease dripping" funk workouts. Except for Henry Vestine's guitar, the rest of the set is pretty drab.

**James Brown: Live At Montreux 1981 (Eagle Eye 39129; 71:00—DVD; 37:20—CD) ★★★** Pushing 50 and rebounding from legal woes, Brown isn't the sizzling stick of dynamite he used to be. His flamboyant singing is bereft of expressive power. All the same, he and his well-rehearsed band, anchored by drummer Tony Cook, deliver the rip-roaring funk on one old hit after another until the sweaty climax, "Sex Machine." Similarly, the CD distilled from the show provides good entertainment, but not the thrills of his best live recordings of the 1960s and '70s. **DB**

Ordering info: [eaglerockent.com](http://eaglerockent.com)