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Thursday, Apr. 09, 2009

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# Revisiting some retro rock recordings

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This week's column begins with an intimate concert at Paris' New Morning Club that will be available for purchase until early May, but can likely be ordered prior to that time.

'The Paris Concert,' Jose Feliciano Band (MVDvisual, HHH and a half)

This is six-time Grammy winner Jose Feliciano's first DVD release, and it's a great one, combining his hit "Light My Fire" with songs made famous by others, like "Purple Haze," "I Got a Woman," "Sunshine of Your Love," "Billie Jean" and "Cherry Cherry."



'At The Roundhouse,' MAN (VoicePrint, HHH)

These guys weren't as famous as Jose Feliciano, but some of the members went on to stardom with other bands, like drummer extraordinaire Terry Williams with Nick Lowe, Dave Edmunds, Rockpile and finally Dire Straits at their "Money for Nothing" peak. I had heard of MAN, but this DVD, which chronicles the final performance of the 13-year, eight-album band, is my first exposure to them.

Mickey Jones and Deke Leonard are gifted guitarist/vocalists, and the high harmony vocals that they provide (with backing by keyboardist Phil Ryan, Williams, and bassist John McKenzie) anchor jams featuring lead/slide guitars, varied dynamics, and tempo changes. Jam band fans are the primary audience for this DVD, and they'll love it.

'Electric Warrior,' T. Rex (Reprise/Rhino, HHHH and a half)

This week, I'm featuring two classic albums of very different stripes. Marc Bolan's 1970 desire to expand the acoustic duo Tyrannosaurus Rex into a proper rock band with the addition of electric guitars, bass and drums produced "T-Rextasy" in England; but radio programmers in America didn't know what to make of songs with fantastical lyrics, otherworldly backing vocals (Flo & Eddie) and Bolan's highly

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individual lead voice/ guitar style. Only the hit "Bang a Gong (Get It On)" made a dent here, with the album stalling at No. 32 in the USA. This left Marc, percussionist Mickey Finn, bassist Steve Currie, drummer Will Legend and producer Tony Visconti to pursue several more sonic changes before Bolan's untimely death in a 1977 traffic accident. Great songs like "Planet Queen," "Jeepster," "Lean Woman Blues," "Life's a Gas," "Cosmic Dancer" and others available on reissues like this one sound like a rock 'n' roll variant from another universe. Get a copy for yourself and check it out.

'Tres Hombres,' ZZ Top (Warner Brothers, HHHHH)

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