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Newhouse News Service

May 12, 2006 Friday 5:31 PM EDT

SECTION: ENTERTAINMENT

BYLINE: By KEVIN O'HARE.

Kevin O'Hare is music writer for The Republican of Springfield, Mass.

BODY:

Rating scale: one star (poor) to five (a classic)

DVD Spotlight:

Leo Kottke, "Home and Away Revisited" (MVD) **THREE STARS**

Leo Kottke is an immensely gifted guitarist, whether putting his virtuosity to work on a six-string or 12-string acoustic guitar, or getting down into the blues with some stellar slide work.

This newly expanded DVD edition of a 1988 film features the stringman supreme both onstage and off. Most of the musical portions were shot at Toronto's Bathurst St. Theater. Kottke's playing is consistently dazzling whether he's delving into instrumentals such as "Taxco Steps," a delicate cover of Duane Allman's "Little Martha," or singing his way through a very amusing version of Alex Harvey and Eddie Reeves' "Rings." Kottke even tracks down Reeves in the documentary so the songwriter can explain the lyrics to him.

That brand of dry, offbeat humor is found in plenty of the off-stage film footage, most of which was recorded in Kottke's home base of Minnesota. There are also some timeless moments of Kottke playing with other musicians, especially a star-studded take of "Last Steam Engine Train," which finds him pickin' alongside Chet Atkins and Doc Watson in Nashville.

LOAD-DATE: May 15, 2006