

reviews dvds

50 YEARS WITH PETER, PAUL AND MARY

★★★★★

MVD DVD



I don't know about you Brits, but The Greenwich Village-nurtured, pop-folk trio of Peter Yarrow, Paul Stookey and the late Mary Travers, assembled by

Albert Grossman in 1961, had a tremendous effect on many Americans during their high school and college years. With their brazen-faced virtuosity front and centre, they earnestly testified to the ability of music to have an impact on the social climate of their generation and the world at large.

In addition to well-chosen protest and topical songs such as 'If I Had A Hammer', 'Blowin' In The Wind', 'Plane Wreck At Los Gatos', 'The Times They Are A-Changing', 'The Great Mandala' and Malvina Reynolds' sadly still relevant query, 'Where Have All The Flowers Gone?', the trio also included comic and children's songs (remember 'Puff The Magic Dragon?') in their repertoire. They scored nearly 20 *Billboard* charters between '62 and '69, with Warner Bros' Milt Okun producing, and with its focus on segments of the trio's career not previously seen - including rare and previously unseen TV footage as well as a BBC appearance from the early '60s - this new 78-minute documentary DVD, produced by Jim Brown, is a real treat.

From the group's emergence in the folk tumult of the Village, to the Civil Rights and Anti-War eras of the '60s, through their later decades of promulgation and music (often along with Pete Seeger) to Mary Travers' inspiring memorial up to the present, their legacy continues to illuminate and inspire ensuing generations.

Gary von Tersch

DR STRANGELOVE OR HOW I LEARNED TO STOP WORRYING AND LOVE THE BOMB

★★★★★

CRITERION COLLECTION BLURAY



Arriving on the big screen little more than a year after the world was brought to the very brink of nuclear Armageddon in the form of The Cuban Missile Crisis of

October 1962, how such a profoundly subversive treatment of such a deadly serious subject as Stanley Kubrick's *Dr Strangelove* ever came to be financed and released by one of the major American studios (Columbia) still beggars belief, while only adding to the bite of the famously all engulfing black humour.

Blessed with Terry Southern's breathtakingly razor sharp script, which came based on The Cold War novel *Red Alert* by Peter George, the film is illuminated by unforgettable *tour de force* performances from Peter Sellers in his celebrated Oscar-nominated triple roles as the hapless RAF group Captain Lionel Mandrake, US President Merkin Muffley and the sinister Dr Strangelove, Sterling Hayden as the psychotic General Jack D Ripper and Slim Pickens as the consummately gung-ho Major Kong, with superlative support from a strength in depth cast including George C Scott, James Earl Jones and Keenan Wynn.

Presented with Criterion's usual exacting standards and customary attention to detail, among the typically generous ration of supplementary material are excerpts from a '66 audio interview with Kubrick, archive interviews with Peter Sellers and George C Scott and a number of *Strangelove* themed documentaries. Few mainstream feature films have ever captured the *zeitgeist* of

their era so chillingly and completely as *Dr Strangelove* and more than half a century later, along with *2001: A Space Odyssey*, it continues to resonate as Kubrick's defining masterpiece.

Grahame Bent

MAN OF THE WORLD: THE PETER GREEN STORY

★★★★

MVD DVD



Born in London's bucolic Bethnal Green in 1946, the original founder and leader of Fleetwood Mac, Peter Allen Greenbaum, began playing bass guitar in

a variety of covers bands (Bobby Dennis & The Dominoes, The Muskrats, The Tridents) and, impressed by technique of The Shadows' lead guitarist Hank Marvin's, began developing his own reverb and delay-laden approach overlaid with a distinctively quixotic vibrato sound. Eventually, elements of both BB and Albert King were also incorporated. After three months with Peter Bardens' band, The Looners (where he met Mick Fleetwood) Green replaced Eric Clapton in John Mayall's Bluesbreakers for about a year - he's the guitarist on Mayall's *A Hard Road*, which featured Green's instrumental gem 'Supernatural'.

After forming Mac in '67 with slide guitarist Jeremy Spencer and John McVie, Green began composing in earnest with subsequent LPs containing riveting titles on the order of 'Black Magic Woman', 'Oh Well', 'Man Of The World', the LSD-inspired 'The Green Manalishi' and the million-selling, numinous instrumental 'Albatross'. Unfortunately, however, Green's drug habit veered totally out of control and he spiralled into schizophrenia. Unluckily, he was treated with Electro Convulsive Therapy

that only prolonged his illness and extended his absence from the music scene. But there's a happy ending, of sorts, with his re-emergence to the studio and live scene in the mid-90s.

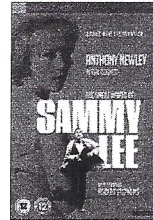
This laudable, 150-minute project contains extensive and rare studio and performance footage along with stills and original, in-depth interviews with all the principals, including the still active Green, Mick Fleetwood, John Mayall, Jeremy Spencer, Carlos Santana, John McVie and big-eared producer Mike Vernon.

Gary von Tersch

THE SMALL WORLD OF SAMMY LEE

★★★★

STUDIO CANAL DVD

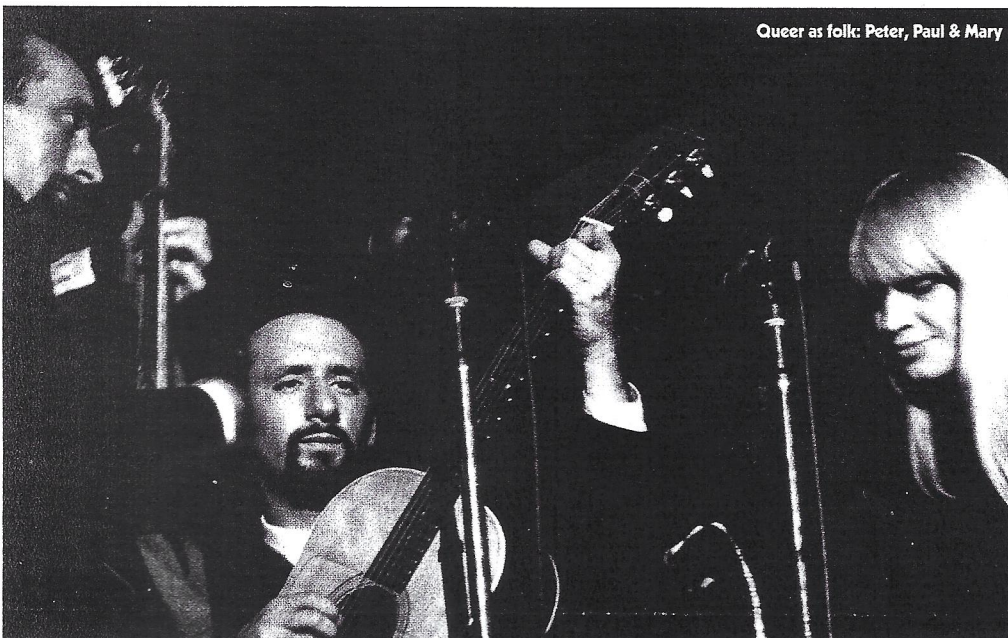


Sammy Lee's world is defined and delineated by the specific geographical landmarks of Soho in the early '60s against whose *tableau vivant* of cafés, bars, restaurants, book shops and strip clubs the drama of his increasingly desperate attempts to raise the cash to pay off a £300 gambling debt is played out. Thematically we're in the same *milieu* as Cliff in *Expresso Bongo*, although the ambience of Ken Hughes' 1963 feature is rather more world-weary and down at heel.

Anthony Newley positively excels as Sammy, a man trapped in his small time existence as the comper of a Soho strip club. Julia Foster meanwhile is perfect as the innocent girl lured from "up north" by the promise of the bright lights. Wilfred Brambell, Roy Kinnear and Warren Mitchell all show up in supporting roles. The other two stars of the film are undoubtedly the locations and the outstanding black and white cinematography of Wolfgang Suschitzky (*Get Carter*), a former stills photographer and documentary cameraman who invests the plentiful location work on the streets, lanes and alleyways of Soho with the eye of a seasoned documentarist. Also worthy of mention is the fine understated jazz score by Kenneth Graham later rescued from oblivion and released by the redoubtable Johnny Trunk.

The supporting programme of extras includes interviews with Julia Foster and Mike Hodges - (director of *Get Carter*), who discusses the influence of *The Small World Of Sammy Lee* on his own work, and a highly detailed featurette on the Soho locations.

Grahame Bent



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