

Treasures extravaganza about the park and inception, **Disneyland Secrets, Stories & Magic** (UPC#786936702057, \$33). Enthusiasts will be excited to learn that there is replica of an 'A, B, C, D, E' ticket booklet included with the platters, from the days before POP.

The first platter contains a very satisfying 81-minute retrospective documentary about the creation of the park and the additions and alterations it has seen over the years (Disney designed the park to morph with popular culture). The 2007 program embraces both the artistic aspects of the park's design as well as the ins and outs of the conception and execution of various rides, periodically tinged with nostalgia as older designers recall the thrills of seeing their ideas brought to fruition. (A documentary filmmaker, even working under the Disney aegis, could make a fascinating piece on the actual daily operation of the park.) The show is in full screen format. All of the primary programs on the DVD have optional English subtitles.

That's the central program of the first platter, but the best part of the entire DVD is the 42-minute 1956 documentary that accompanies it, *People and Places Disneyland, U.S.A.*, a Cinemascope Technicolor short that is presented with pristine colors in letterboxed format, with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1 and an accommodation for enhanced 16:9 playback. Why don't widescreen movies today look like this? The framing on every shot is riveting, and whether you are traveling over the park in a skyride or following a horse-drawn cart in a parade, the image compositions seem to place you right in the middle of the location itself. The music on the program has been remastered for 5.1-channel Dolby Digital sound, bringing a kind of grandness to the presentation that matches the impact of the picture. The documentary is basically a tour of the park's various areas and activities, but regardless of how often in the past you've seen the material in other programs, you'll want to watch this one again and again. And as an encouragement to do so, there is an alternate commentary track featuring Disney host Leonard Maltin and current park designer Tony Baxter, who react to the various rides, reminisce about the impact the rides had on their imaginations as children, and also share more informative insight about the designs and functions of the park's components.

The third offering on the first platter is also worthwhile—one of the most elaborate and satisfying 'trivia games' we have ever come across. The game is quite diabolical, as you have to answer seven (or more if you fail) questions before you can open up a brief but interesting featurette about some aspect of the park. The thing is, there are more than a dozen featurettes and you have to get through the game successfully each time to open just one. We're still working our way through it.

The second platter contains three episodes from the *Walt Disney's Wonderful World of Color* television program that promote the park in various ways. There is one large redundancy (two of the shows contain the same lengthy segment on *It's a Small World*), but otherwise, each full screen 49-minute program is reasonably satisfying, and the colors on all three are lovely. *The Golden Horseshoe Revue*, from 1962, replicates what is supposedly a floorshow from one of the theaters in the park, although Annette Funicello and Ed Wynn are part of the cast. The show itself supposedly replicates a Music Hall performance from the 1890s and is a viable mixture of humor and schmaltz with a few recognizable numbers that you'll continue to hum after the program is over. The sound is especially vivid. The best episode of the three, from 1964, *Disneyland Goes to the World's Fair*, is about the design and construction of various rides and displays for the 1964 New York World's Fair, most of which were then relocated to Disneyland. The third program, from 1966, *Disneyland Around the Seasons*, is a typical Disneyland promo show (although the seasonal identifiers are tenuous—it's always summer at Disneyland), with music and rides and people having fun.

Also featured on the platter is a 14-minute black-and-white piece that shows how the opening day broadcast featured on **Disneyland USA** was set up and rehearsed. The segment was not intended for the public and is reasonably interesting, as television cameras at the time were rather bulky and had to be transported on forklifts. A still frame gallery features a few conceptual drawings.

Finally, there is an excellent 38-minute collection of silent home movie and timelapse footage of the construction of Disneyland (culled, apparently from some 200 hours of such material) that is accompanied by comments from three Disney designers, who talk about the actual construction being depicted and other bits of Disney history and lore.

Punk Boys

The lead singer for the Dead Boys, Stiv Bators, pulls a Ted Levine on stage in **Return of the Living Dead Boys Halloween Night 1986**, an MVD Visual release (UPC#022891466598, \$15), dropping his pants after hiding his you-know-what between his legs, all without missing a beat. Let's see Mick Jagger top that. The New York City concert is surprisingly melodious for a punk group that normally chose to deliver their songs in a numbed, monotone wale, and between the quality of the energetic music and the low rent stage antics, the 63-minute set is reasonably engaging.

Shot on cheap video, the full screen picture is smeary and grainy, with subdued colors, but you can make out details just fine when the stage lighting accommodates the view. The 5.1-channel Dolby Digital soundtrack seems less crisp and direct than the highly satisfying mono track. There is no

captioning. Also featured is an excellent 1980 Youngstown Ohio hometown TV interview with Bators and fellow band member Frank Secich running 15 minutes, in which they let down their guard, at least a little bit, to talk about their adventures up to that point. Also featured during the spot is a presentation of one of the band's few music videos, *Sonic Reducer*.

Carey concert

The fans are so loud and unrelenting that you don't get much vocal nuance out of Mariah Carey on **Mariah Carey The Adventures of Mimi**, a 3 Disc Deluxe Edition released by Live Nation Artists and Image Entertainment (UPC#014381498127, \$20). The concert program, presented on the first platter, runs 79 minutes. Thanks to the 5.1-channel Dolby Digital track (and the even better defined DTS track), Carey's voice is clearly separated from the crowd (her instrumental backup less so), and she does seem to be hitting her notes, but it isn't like she has the comfort and privacy of a recording studio to caress her lyrics. Although her face is a little less soft and vulnerable, and a little more sculpted and tight than in her past video programs, she is still drop dead gorgeous, and it is hard to take your eyes off her better-than-perfect midriff anyway, so that even though the concert audio basically gives you the suggestion of her hit numbers wrapped in a blanket of continual screaming, the visuals are too arresting to even consider turning the program off or scanning through it.

The picture is presented in letterboxed format only, with an aspect ratio of about 1.78:1 and an accommodation for enhanced 16:9 playback. The color transfer is generally crisp. There is no captioning. The first platter also features a 15-minute collection of behind-the-scenes footage, which is supported by optional English, French and Spanish subtitles.

The second platter contains a 34-minute interview with Carey, in which she primarily talks about the people working with her and the music. There is also a presentation of six song numbers with 'karaoke' subtitles and the option to suppress Carey's vocals, and a 5-minute collection of 'webisode' cliffhangers entitled *Lovers and Haters* about people gossiping. The third platter is a CD-ROM that attempts to promote various Carey online marketing schemes

Have you considered Ford lately?

Electric jazz guitarist Robben Ford appears for the second time in a 1997 German concert released as part of the *Ohne Filter Musik Pur* series from Inakustik, **Robben Ford in Concert Revisited** (UPC#7077-87654197, \$20). We reviewed Ford's first set in Aug 05. The new 53-minute program pretty much picks up where the other left off, offering a mix of flat out rock numbers and something that is more coherently styled than jamming but less resolute than a standard song. In any case, the show is energetic and appealing.

The picture is presented in full screen format only. The image is very crisp and fresh looking. The 5.1-channel Dolby Digital sound is also clear and sharp, with a full dimensionality. The program is accompanied by the standard collection of *Ohne Filter* background materials.

Ford is also part of **Auteur Du Blues / Carlton / Ford**, a *New Morning The Paris Concert* program from Inakustik (UPC#707787646970, \$20), joining guitarist Larry Carlton and the French group, Auteur Du Blues, for a 2006 performance that ranges from Bob Dylan numbers to classic blues riffs, at least as best as the French can replicate them. While the 92-minute program is not as complex as Ford's solo set, it gets better as it goes along, especially if you look at it as more of a tribute to the genre than an actual attempt to explore the music's parameters.

The picture is in letterboxed format, with an aspect ratio of about 1.78:1 and an accommodation for enhanced 16:9 playback. The color transfer looks fine and fingering details are usually clear. The 5.1-channel Dolby Digital sound is reasonably good, and there is a DTS track that is slightly crisper and richer. Also featured are two additional numbers running a total of 9 minutes, including a sit down duet with Carlton and Ford.

Lots of music

More than a dozen musicians join the wheelchair-bound female accordionist on The Daisy Label release, **Sharon Shannon and Big Band Live at Dolans** (UPC#027585010998, \$15), and because it is such a diverse group, the undated 140-minute concert, shot in Ireland, ranges from folk music and schmaltz to country-western and rock. Have you heard *Big Rock Candy Mountain* lately? It's there, too. Shannon is in center stage, but it is usually so crowded she often seems more like an accompanist than the main attraction, although the show always perks up when she chimes in. The music's variety can play to a viewer one of two ways—either the numbers that aren't appealing spoil the ones that are, or the numbers that are appealing make the others worth sitting through. What constitutes what, however, will be up to individual tastes.

The picture is presented in letterboxed format only, with an aspect ratio of about 1.78:1 and an accommodation for enhanced 16:9 playback. The color transfer is crisp and details are clear. The 5.1-channel Dolby Digital sound has a general dimensionality and clear tones. There is no captioning. Also featured are 13 minutes of interviews with the musicians, including Shannon, and a surprisingly satisfying 3 minutes of interviews with random members of the audience. Text profiles of the musicians are included, as well.