

THE BIG TAKEOVER

the zombies

odessey & oracle (revisited); the 40th anniversary concert (dvd)

(Redhouse/MVD)

As someone who *badly* wanted to fly to London to see these stunningly rare shows March 7, 8, and 9, 2008 at Shepherd's Bush Empire—a non-starter with my son born six weeks prior—this film of the middle gig has done the impossible: It's tricked me into thinking I *did*. The 1968 baroque pop masterpiece *Odessey* is one of the 20 greatest LPs ever, but London's remarkable *Zombies* (1959-1968) broke up before ever playing *any* of it live. The quintet has done only two reunions since—the first in 1997—playing a couple songs. So to see four of the five (R.I.P. guitarist **Paul Atkinson**, 1946-2004) play all 13 (plus 1964 #2 “She's Not There” and 1964 #6 “Tell Her No” in closing), with such utter beauty four decades later in their 60s, leaves this writer *speechless*. The studio-quality sound and camera work (lingering shots with unusual clarity) is so strong, you clap with the crowd after songs. How *lovely* to see/hear impeccable Beach Boys-esque harmonies take flight—“Changes” is a revelation—plus little things such as smiling bassist **Chris White**'s lead vocals on “Brief Candles” and the chilling “Butcher's Tale,” or again how preserved **Colin Blunstone**'s wondrous menthol voice remains. The estimable, thrilled **Al Kooper**—who single-handedly insured *Odessey*'s release here, or the world would little know 1968 #3, “Time of the Season”—delivers a heartfelt, hilarious introduction, too. Standing ovation! (mvdvisual.com)