

We love seeing the plan

We were spellbound by **Composing the Beatles Songbook Lennon and McCartney 1957-1965** (Mar 08) and are now happy to report that MVD has released the concluding volume, **Composing the Beatles Songbook Lennon and McCartney 1966-1970** (UPC#823564515595, \$20), and that the 2008 installment is just as mesmerizing as the first part was. Using interviews with critics and a few individuals who were present at the time, the 112-minute program deconstructs the creation of each Beatles album (following *Rubber Soul*, which was where the first volume left off). Along with shots of the talking heads, there is terrific archival footage of the Beatles and other relevant visual clips to support both the music and the discussions. Consistently insightful, the program is intellectually rewarding and provides an astute cultural history of the Sixties, but beyond all of that, the show is just downright entertaining as all get out. The songs are so familiar and yet the stories behind them are surprisingly unknown, so there is a constant rediscovery going on in the program in scene after scene, with one delightful, eye-opening insight after another. There have been very few movies we've seen in the past couple of months that have given us anywhere near as much pleasure.

The full screen picture is in fine shape, and the stereo sound is clear, with a very mild dimensionality. There is no captioning. Also featured are text profiles of the interviewees and a very good 5-minute deleted sequence that contains more insights to *A Day in the Life*.

Zeppelin roots

While it may appear like the program is just an excuse to put the popular rock group's name in its title, **Down the Tracks The Music That Influenced Led Zeppelin**, from Eagle Rock Entertainment (UPC#80121350-9591, \$13), is in fact a very good documentary that takes its title to heart. Running 92 minutes, the program features well researched profiles of early blues singers and the later singers who were influenced by them, as well as profiles of Sam Phillips and Elvis Presley, British folk singers, the British 'skiffle' music craze, and even J.R.R. Tolkien. Without drawing the conclusion of how it all came together, the 2008 program is not just an excellent dissection of the various ingredients that can be heard in Zeppelin's music, it is also a valid and rewarding capsule history of musical genre development. Best moment—a clip of folk musician Davey Graham playing the opening chords to *Stairway to Heaven*, in 1959.

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 looks fine. Since most of the audio clips are from a long time ago, the nominally stereo sound is centered. The music recorded for the program is steady and clear. There are optional English and French subtitles.

Whole lotta Tori

Singing sweetly and tootling on the piano, Tori Amos has two Led Zeppelin covers, including *Whole Lotta Love*, in the sets she performs on **Tori Amos Live at Montreux 1991 1992**, an Eagle Eye Media release (UPC# 801213917297, \$15). She sits at an angle so the audience can see her while she sings into the microphone and strokes the keys, which looks uncomfortable but doesn't appear to affect her musicianship. The two concerts can be accessed individually, or they can be played through together for a total 94-minute running time. In the 1991 set, she is surrounded by equipment, while on the 1992 program the stage is bare except for her piano and a few lights, but the shows basically look and sound the same, and are almost interchangeable, making for a smooth and uninterrupted program. Amos is by herself, and she occasionally makes mistakes or stops to chastise talkers in the audience, but otherwise she just plays and sings. Her vocals are clearspoken, even when she is doing Zeppelin or Nirvana, and her piano playing is competent and supportive, making a very pleasant program that delivers twice as much quality as anyone in one of the auditoriums could enjoy. And please, oh please, could she someday do *The Lemon Song*?

The picture is 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 sharp and clear. The 5.1-channel Dolby Digital sound is nicely defined, and the DTS track is even crisper and richer. There is no captioning.

On Eagle's BD (UPC#901213332298, \$25), you can see and practically count every strand of hair on her head. The image on the DVD is already vivid, but the image on the BD is better than a clear window. As for the DTS track, it is the audio equivalent of that same clarity. There is more mid-range presence and detail, and a stronger blast of here and now. In terms of format and design, the BD is identical to the DVD, but in audio and video delivery, its enhanced clarity is captivating.

DVD News

OUR ANNUAL POLL, OR LACK THEREOF: As you may have read about or heard on the TV, the world is in a major economic recession that may lead to the first depression in nearly a century. In order to sustain a functional viability in light of these events, the DVD-Laser Disc Newsletter has had to undergo a little belt tightening that we hope will be of a temporary nature. One casualty of our newfound financial prudence, however, is our Annual Consumer Poll. We would still like to hear from you, but we can no longer prompt you with a cute green mailer. Instead, please write to us at Consumer Poll, DVD-Laser Disc Newsletter, PO Box 420, East Rockaway

NY 11518, or email us at dpratt@DVDLaser.com and let us know what titles you would like to see released on DVD, what titles you would like to see released on Blu-ray (BD), what you think was the best DVD to be released in the past 12 months, what you think is the BD you've seen to date, and, if you get a chance, what BD you think has the best, knock-you-couch-backwards (or send chills down your spine through surround) audio track. Any other opinions you would like to offer would also be welcome. We will publish the results in our Feb 09 issue, which, you can rest assured, will arrive in your mailbox with the same regularity as it has in the past.

SAMMY TALK: Koch Vision's release of the original Fifties television drama, **What Makes Sammy Run?**, will have a commentary with Dina Merrill and Barbara Rush.

WOMEN DOCS: Warner Home Video's release of **The Women** remake will have two documentaries.

BABYLON DOCS: Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment's release of **Babylon AD** will have a number of featurettes. **Mirrors** will have deleted scenes and featurettes. **Behind Enemy Lines Colombia** will have a commentary and a number of featurettes.

WACKNESS TALK: Sony Pictures Home Entertainment's **The Wackness** will have a commentary, deleted scenes and other materials.

MORE BLU: The following titles have recently been issued on Blu-ray—Paul McCartney *The Space within Us*, *The Universe Season One* (A&E); *Heathers*, *Mad Money* (Anchor Bay); *The Final Countdown*, *The Stendhal Syndrome* (Blue Underground); *WALL•E* (Buena Vista); *Kiss of the Spider Woman* (City Lights); *HDScape Ocean Aquarium* (DVD International); *The Colt* (Echo Bridge); *Freedom* (Geneon); *Dragon Ball Z Cooler's Revenge/The Return of Cooler*, *Vexille* (Goldhil); *Battle for the Planet of the Apes*, *Beneath the Planet of the Apes*, *Conquest of the Planet of the Apes*, *Escape from the Planet of the Apes*, *Firefly The Complete Series*, *Futurama Bender's Game*, *Meet Dave*, *Planet of the Apes*, *Space Chimps* (Fox); *Band of Brothers* (HBO); *Encounters at the End of the World*, *IMAX Coral Reef Adventure*, *IMAX Dolphins*, *IMAX The Living Sea*, *Jeff Dunham Spark of Insanity*, *Jeff Dunham Very Special Christmas Special*, *Sunrise Earth Seaside Collection*, *The Who at Kilburn 1977* (Image); *The Lost Gods* (Infinity); *Black Christmas*, *Soundstage Sheryl Crow Live*, *The Story of O* (Koch); *Monster's Ball*, *Universal Soldier* (Lionsgate); *Beckett*, *George Carlin It's Bad For Ya* (MPI); *Blackalicious 4/20 Live in Seattle*, *Cannibal Taboo*, *Gunnin' for That #1 Spot*, *Jesus Christ Vampire Hunter* (MVD); *Fireplace*, *Kitaro*, *Live from Abbey Road Best of Season One* (Navarre); *Giuseppe Verdi Rigoletto*, *Richard Strauss Der Rosenkavalier* (Naxos); *Blu-Ray Experience Opera and Ballet*, *Carmen* (Opus Arte); *Kung Fu Panda*, *Tropic Thunder* (Paramount); *Warren Miller's Playground* (Shout); *Blue Streak*, *Foo Fighters Live at Wembley Stadium*, *Hall & Oates Live at the Troubadour*, *Hancock*, *MirrorMask*, *National Security*, *Revolver*, *Ricky Martin Live Black and White Tour*, *Sara Bareilles Between the Lines Live at the Fillmore*, *Southland Tales*, *Tenacious D The Complete Masterworks 2*, *This Christmas* (Sony); *Barenaked Ladies Talk to the Hand Live in Michigan*, *Heart Dreamboat Annie Live*, *OAR Live from Madison Square Garden* (Summit); *Hellboy II The Golden Army*, *Holiday Fire*, *Jarhead*, *Katt Williams It's Pimpin' Pimpin'*, *The Kingdom*, *Rush Snakes & Arrows Live* (Universal); *A Christmas Story*, *Chuck The Complete First Season*, *Fred Claus*, *Get Smart*, *JFK Director's Cut*, *National Geographic Extreme*, *NBA Champions 2008*, *The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants 2*, *Star Wars The Clone Wars*, *Superman Doomsday*, *Supernatural Season 3* (Warner); *Paris Je T'Aime*, *Priceless*, *Sukyaki Western Django*, *Transsiberian*, *UFC Ultimate Comebacks* (WEA); *Awake*, *Blue Man Group How to Be a Megastar Live!*, *Lucky # Slevin*, *3 The Dale Earnhardt Story* (Weinstein)

DVD and LD Ads

(All DVD and LD Ads are 50 cents a word. Deadline is 5 business days before the end of the month. Address all ads: DVD & LD Ads, The DVD-Laser Disc Newsletter, PO Box 420, East Rockaway NY 11518-0420.)

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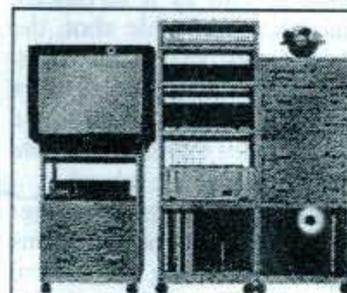
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