

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2010

BLOG ARCHIVE

"America's Music Legacy" DVD series: "Soul", "Folk", and "Blues"

These early 1980s-era TV programs are less historical documentaries, and more simply period showcases of the era's prominent players. And that makes for some rather hit and miss performances. Coming into the indulgent 80s from the disco 70s isn't too encouraging, either. Each volume runs 2 hours, so there's plenty to wade through.



On the "Soul" volume, it's all kicked off in a powerful way with the immortal James Brown, who singlehandedly makes this one worthy with his tireless and charismatic performances. The grooves he and his band kick out are tight and positively feral. Awesome. Standouts are also seen from Ben E. King, Otis Redding, and Gladys Knight and the Pips. In-between some of these fine performers are several cringe-worthy and schmaltzy pop tunes. I say, buy this one for James Brown and Gladys Knight.

The "Folk" volume doesn't fare much better. Buffy Saint Marie is splendid, with her unusual and creative meldings of folk and Cree Indian sounds. Hoyt Axton is cool, too, though he pushes into country strongly. Josh White Jr. brings a strong and soulful acapella showing, and John McEuen's "Old Man From Missouri" is an amazing bit of banjo virtuosity. As with the previous volume in this series, there are plenty of awful moments, with the squeaky-clean New Christy Minstrels being a prime example of glossy dreck. Ugh. And Glenn Yarbrough's silly falsetto folk is effectively a stereotype of its own. Far too much kitsch here to warrant purchase.

Finally, we have the "Blues" edition. The always-amazing B.B. King is a highlight, with 3 songs featured. Joe Williams is another legend here, as is Brownie McGhee, Buddy Guy, Pee Wee Crayton, and others. Some classic blues here, with a fair share of glossy, over-embellished material, but nonetheless, "Blues" is a mostly entertaining watch. [\(MVD Visual\)](#)

Posted by Goatsden at 8:30 PM



Labels: [America's Music Legacy](#), [B.B. King](#), [Ben E. King](#), [Brownie McGhee](#), [Buddy Guy](#), [Buffy Saint Marie](#), [Gladys Knight](#), [James Brown](#), [John McEuen](#), [Josh White Jr](#), [Otis Redding](#), [Pee Wee Crayton](#)

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