
Leonard Cohen: Under Review 1935-1977
Pink Floyd: Meddle: A Classic Album Under Review
Live at Ground Zero Blues Club/Buddy Guy
The Crooners

The latest entries in MVD's provocative **Under Review** series analyze the work of singer-songwriter-poet **Leonard Cohen** and psychedelic rockers **Pink Floyd** at early, yet pivotal points in their formidable careers. In the mid-'60s, Cohen had just returned to North America from a long sojourn in Greece and would begin adding music to words previously reserved for poetry and novels. The Montreal native had been living on the island of Hydra for most of the folk era back home, and, by the time he caught up with it in New York, he was older than most of emerging troubadours and far more worldly. The darkly shaded romanticism of **Songs of Leonard Cohen** - - and his irresistible portrait of a personal muse, Suzanne, in particular -- stood in direct contrast to the cynicism and protestations of most other singer-songwriters of the period, including **Bob Dylan**, whose abstract poetics defied easy interpretation. Several well known music critics put Cohen's first five albums under the microscope, adding context and analysis to the recollections of fellow musicians, engineers and cronies. The discussion occasionally borders on the scholarly, but is saved by archival clips and interviews, as well as snippets of music. The bonus material adds a featurette about Cohen's band, Army; a trivia quiz; and short bios of the commentators.

For **Pink Floyd**, the 1971 album *Meddle* represented a turning away from the psychedelic rave-ups and avant-garde experimentation of the band's formative years. The music was about to evolve into something far more focused and accessible. In addition to the 23-minute prog-rock sonic poem, *Echoes*, the album also would introduce **One of These Days**, which would go on to become a concert staple for decades to come. Critics and friends of the band are on hand to help deconstruct *Meddle*, and the package also includes footage from vintage live and studio performances and photographs.

One of the sad truths revealed in the PBS series **Martin Scorsese Presents The Blues** was the fact that blues artists are disappearing faster than they can be produced. This distinctly modern art form is still practiced in nightclubs in nightclubs, large and small, funky and urbane, in the rural South and capitals of the world. **Bobby Rush** was featured in the series' **Road to Memphis** segment, as a R&B musician who's toiled for 50 years on the Chitlin' Circuit and is still going strong. The DVD was recorded in the heart of the Delta, at the Ground Zero Blues Club in Clarksdale, Miss.

Other music-related DVDs new to the marketplace include **The Crooners**, which features such leading stylists as **Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Bing Crosby, Nat King Cole** and **Perry Como**, in performances from the heyday of the saloon singer. The ultra-smooth vocals displayed a respect for lyrics, orchestration and audiences almost non-existent in 2007. Also appearing in the DVD are **Louis Armstrong**, who most certainly wasn't a crooner, but could hang with the best of 'em, and guests **Ann-Margret, Bob Hope, Jerry Lewis** and **Jack Benny**. -- *Gary Dretzka*

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