



DVD REVIEW

The Byrds

Under Review

Sexy Intellectual (SIDVD524)

Grade: ★★★★★

Tracking the history of the Byrds — call it their flight path if you will — has never been a matter of simple discourse. Through innumerable personnel changes that altered entirely their original brain trust and introduced profound changes to rock's musical motif, they remain one of the most influential and adventurous bands of the modern rock era. Its no small accomplishment that the producers of "Under Review" have yielded such a thorough and engrossing documentary to detail the band's story, one that traces the group from its folkie origins through its numerous permutations and eventually to its final fade as country-rock

avatars.

Like other offerings in the "Under Review" series, the bulk of these two discs is preoccupied with talking heads — critics, scribes and various musical associates — offering their views on the band's evolution. It's a credible bunch, one that includes such astute observers as Byrds biographer Johnny Rogan, ex Rolling Stone editor Anthony DeCurtis, journalists Richie Unterberger and Nigel Williamson, keyboardist/arranger Van Dykes Parks, musicians Byron Berline and Vern Gosdin, as well as later Byrds John York and Gene Parsons. To be sure, the only members of the band's original inner circle represented here are David Crosby and Chris Hillman, and their comments are only incidental. The inclusion of rare video — snippets of the original band performing their early hits, a clip of McGuinn and company playing alongside Earl Scruggs on "You Ain't Going Nowhere" and footage of guitarist Clarence White jamming with Andy Griffith on the latter's sitcom — nicely complements the

commentary.

Nevertheless, the most fascinating aspect of this double-disc set comes in the form of its personal asides. One revelation repeats producer Terry Melcher's response when asked who was the most difficult rock musician he ever worked with ("David Crosby," he replied without hesitation). Hillman corrects the assumption that Gram Parsons refused to go to South Africa — prompting his dismissal from the band — not because he had moral objections to apartheid but rather because he wanted to continue hanging out with the Rolling Stones. York recalls how they were rebuked by the label hierarchy at CBS Nashville, who scorned them as long-haired hippies. While the chatter isn't consistently so revealing — after all the basics of The Byrds story are mostly well-known — the three-hour narrative is as fascinating as the band's tangled trajectory would imply. Suffice it say both Byrds-lovers and casual admirers will find it absolutely intriguing.

— Lee Zimmerman

band dusts off a few from the archives, such as "Digital Man" and "Entre Nous." Rush also plays nine songs from its latest studio album from which this album derives its name, 2007's *Snakes & Arrows*.

This may not be Rush's best live album, but it's certainly good stuff for their fans and live-rock aficionados.

— Ray Sidman

R.E.M.

Accelerate

Warner Bros. (418620)

Grade: ★★★★★

Politics always go down easier when forced, not coaxed. These days, it doesn't do much good to calmly walk someone through the ins and outs of Iraq, the recession and Bush's blunders. A slap to the face and a punch to the gut are not only required, they persuasively make their point.

And so it goes with *Accelerate*, R.E.M.'s 14th album — a plugged-in, pissed-off and totally amped record that completely reverses the languid crawl of the band's output over the past decade. A solid combo of hooks ("Hollow Man") and cranked-up volume ("Living Well Is the Best Revenge") fuel *Accelerate*. There isn't much subtlety to Michael Stipe's lyrics — "If the storm doesn't kill me/The government will" about Katrina, and "The battle's been lost, the war is not won" (guess what that one's about) — but like most of this distortion-soaked CD, there's little time for pussyfooting.

True to its title, *Accelerate's* 11 songs breeze through in less than 35 minutes. As Stipe

says at the very end of the album's best song, "Supernatural Superserious," wow. www.warnerbrosrecords.com

— Michael Gallucci

Diana Ross

Everything Is Everything (Expanded Edition)

Hip-OSelect.com (B0008093-02)

Grade: ★★★★★

Divas don't come any more resplendent than Diana Ross, and on *Everything Is Everything*, her 1970 sophomore solo album, she gets the lush musical accompaniment that must be afforded someone of her standing. Unfortunately, the material provided to her wasn't always as regal.

Coming on the heels of the tour-de-force that was her self-titled debut, nothing on *Everything Is Everything* is as gripping or transcendent as the towering "Ain't No Mountain High Enough," and songs like "Ain't No Sad Song" are lost in a sea of Vegas glitz. Granted, she set the bar awfully high on *Diana Ross*, also released in 1970, and maintaining that standard of excellence is daunting. Still, even all these years later, *Everything Is Everything* still comes off as a plate of cold leftovers — however flavorful.

Nevertheless, *Everything Is Everything* simply couldn't be stale and lifeless, not with the charismatic Ross and her sparkling vocal champagne pouring intoxicants into the ears of those eager to give this record the second chance it merits. Opener "My Place" and the

bouyant title track are effervescent pieces of pop joy, while the soulful Aretha Franklin cover "I Love You (Call Me)" and "How About You" are elegant and sophisticated, thanks to the sublime production of Jackson 5 hitmaker Deke Richards, leader of The "Corporation" team.

On the other hand, while U.K. #1 hit "I Love You (Call Me)" has its moments of sheer bliss, it also seems a bit directionless, and Beatles covers "Come Together" and "The Long And Winding Road" feel hopelessly out of place and disjointed. However, *Everything Is Everything* is not without its moments of ecstasy and sensory overload, and bonus tracks like "Wish I Knew" and the Oscar-nominated "What Are You Doing The Rest Of Your Life" — two of seven here — are lovely diversions. Richards' in-depth, insider liner notes and trivia highlights make this package a winner, even with its flaws.

— Peter Lindblad



Beatles

The Beatles

MVD Vis Grade: ★

One w nothing could tu unearth has argu other ac

So, it' new insi with son

The p moment on an er for obse grimy cl its cohe

the way contains Beatles shared k piano pl answer

years la

It's th Hambur that Joh The Bla Quarrym Gramma classma

We're were du accomp single o by the r unconf penis. Y via his r wanted fifth Be was far power E

Unfor early pe some e after th of an al minutes 1968 a rehash intriguing only rea