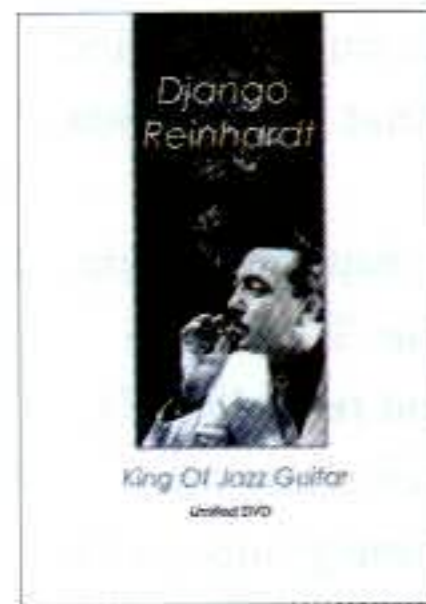


second disc has another near overdose of Floyd, along with documentaries, tour and studio footage.

—Lou Novacheck



DJANGO REINHARDT

King of Jazz Guitar
DVD

(Quantum Leap)

The life and music of Gypsy guitarist Django Reinhardt is covered thoroughly in this

documentary, but it almost comes across as a book on CD rather than a DVD. Although many photos of Django are used, by the time this 120 minute film is over, you have seen them all too many times, and you find yourself listening to this DVD, rather than watching.

The music is magnificent. If you have never heard Django Reinhardt, you will be amazed at his control of his guitar, usually a Selmer Model Jazz acoustic. He is so precise and clear that you might actually think you are listening to an amplified guitar, which he didn't play until he was in his 30s, and never regularly.

Django, a gypsy, was injured in a fire in his caravan and his right leg was partially paralyzed and the fourth and fifth fingers of his left hand severely burnt; he also suffered first and second degree burns over half his body. Doctors originally felt that they would have to amputate his leg, and that he would never play again. Django developed a two-fingered technique that became better than anyone using all fingers.

There is little-known footage of Django playing, and throughout this film, footage of someone playing using all fingers is shown while we are hearing Django's actual recordings. I found this irritating.

There are 21 of his works featured in this video and his collaborations with violinist Stephane Grappelli and the "Quintette du Hot Club de France" are legendary. Django Reinhardt died of a brain hemorrhage at the age of 43. He may not be a household name to all but should be, as his story is fascinating.

—Dan Guilfoyle



MAHAVISHNU ORCHESTRA

Live at Montreux
1984/1974 DVD

(Eagle Rock
Entertainment)

As a 28-year-old sideman, John McLaughlin turned

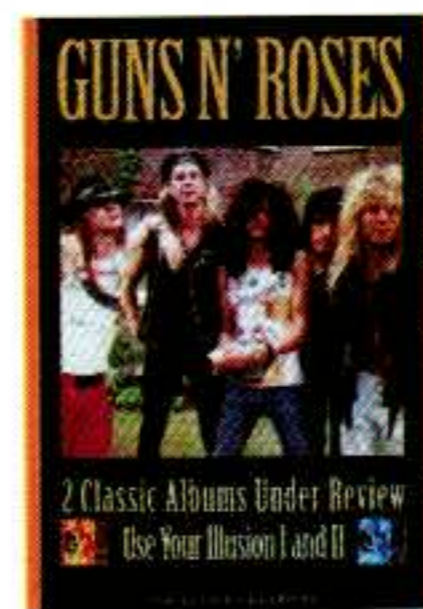
Miles Davis into a psychedelic visionary. As the 32-year-old leader of the Mahavishnu Orchestra, he made jazz a spiritual art-form. Though his trademark band would go through several lineups over the years, McLaughlin always stayed ahead of the curve, crafting compositions as masterful as they were complex. Thanks to this DVD, we're finally able to witness this virtuoso prove these same points on stage.

Despite the absence of drummer Billy Cobham and keyboardist Jan Hammer, McLaughlin still surrounds himself with the right players. In 1974 we saw a young Jean Luc-Ponty who made his violin strings squeal in ways that sound anything but classical. We were also treated to the fabulous freeform bass of 18-year-old Ralphe Armstrong who solidified his career by beating Jaco Pastorius for an open band spot a year earlier. In 1984 we witness the slap-bass techniques of Swedish sensation Jonas Hellborg. Coupled with McLaughlin's innovative playing, the music still sounds decades ahead of its time.

McLaughlin doesn't make much small talk here but lets his fingers, wagging hips, and smiling face exude the intense passion and joy he's feeling. Tracks like "Radio-Activity," "Wings of Karma," "Hymn To Him," and "East Side, West Side," which features a marvelous snippet of Stevie Wonder's "Isn't She Lovely," are all mystical journeys designed to expand the mind and leave fans cheering for more.

Whether searching for inner peace in the 1970s or analyzing what the future holds in the 1980s, John McLaughlin remains an undeniable chameleon who makes even the brashiest melodies sound beautiful. Watching him perform live with both band incarnations gives this fact that much more validity.

—Ira Kantor



GUNS N' ROSES

Under Review: Use
your Illusion I & II
DVD

(Sexy Intellectual)

Here's a strange little disc. Comes with a disclaimer: THIS FILM IS NOT AUTHORIZED

BY GUNS N' ROSES, THEIR RECORD COMPANIES OR MANAGEMENT. That said, this isn't going to create new fans, but if you like G n' R, it's a fun thing, an analysis of the albums *Use Your Illusion I & II*, mostly by crew guys, hired help like piano players, background singers, and peripheral friends of the band, with a couple rock 'n' roll experts thrown in. Basically a gossip fest and body commercial for the band. It does illuminate interesting points about the relationship of the band's creativity to the hype and self indulgence implicit in super stardom. As if we didn't know.

In spite of the fact that I completely got *Appetite For Destruction* and loved it, I actually never bought *Use Your Illusion*, and have never sat through the whole thing. I can take a while to get to some stuff...but nevertheless, I found this film interesting enough to sit through. I actually learned a few things and had a few new thoughts. It's fan territory. You don't have to be a rabid fan, but there it is.

—Robin the Hammer



EDITED BY PHIL FREEMAN

Marooned: The Next
generation of Desert
Island Discs

(Da Capo Press)

Back in 1979, Greil

Marcus posed the

following question

to 20 great writers: "If you were stranded on a desert island, what one record would you want to have with you and why?" The responses were varied, ranging from Huey Smith and the Clowns to the Rolling Stones, with all the stops in between. It made for great reading and we readers asked ourselves the same question. I never did come close to selecting only one album.