

1993's *Juliet Letters* was his first radical departure from pop: a parlor-bound chamber-classical gem where in Costello wears several tuxedos and sings imagined professorially wordy impressions in his hoarse cackle-croon. Juliet? Wherefore art thou liking "I Almost Had a Weakness?" Not the point really; it's more fun watching Costello looking serious in explaining his *Letters*' desires and the Brodskys wrigglingly discussing him discussing said desires.

1997's BBC Studios-filmed *A Case for Song* attempts to wrangle several of the decade's oddball formations and his past's punkish pop into one pretty package. The Attractions? Brilliant. Turning "Pump it Up" into



Slayer's Tom Araya

frazzled garage rock spiked by an accordion? Dashing. But damned if EC doesn't invite the Brodskys and the White City Septet to muck up everything. Still, Costello's coarse vocalizing on the slowly atmospheric "Shipbuilding" and "Pills and Soap" (to say nothing of Brian Wilson's "God Only Knows") is something to see.

Special features: None.

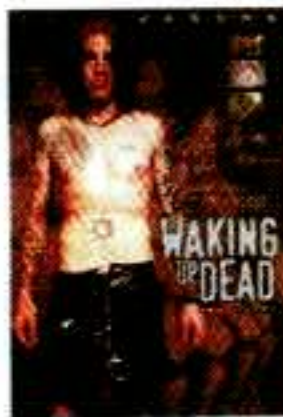
A.D. AMOROSI

WAKING UP DEAD

(MUSIC VIDEO DISTRIBUTORS, 90 MINUTES)

www.mvdb2b.com

Cinema du rehabbe



These days it pays to put your spectacular personal wipeouts on display (see: Tom Sizemore, Danny Bonaduce). Ex-Saigon Kick and

Skid Row drummer Phil Varone's motivations appear more altruistic (just say no, kids). He is, essentially, the same lumbering trainwreck we've seen in *Breaking Bonaduce* and *Shooting Sizemore*, just with a lower Q score and more willpower, maybe even more sincerity. Filmed through four years of his life touring with Skid Row, Varone reflects on ten years of

fuckups and fuckings-over with Saigon Kick, and how the once-sober kid with a bright future in architectural drafting became a beer-swilling, blow-snorting, borderline deadbeat dad and flatlined bag o' crap. Seeing what he threw away while chasing strange and cheap/not-so-cheap thrills is painful, but thankfully moreso to our hero, who evidently finally turns over that new leaf, using it to wipe the foam from the corners of his mouth, and ultimately quit rock 'n' roll to reclaim his past glory as a father and human being.

Special features: Unavailable at press time.

RANDY HARWARD

BEASTS OF BOURBON

LOW LIFE IN SPAIN

DEMOLITION DOLL RODS

LET YOURSELF GO

BLACK LIPS

WILDMEN IN ACTION

(MUNSTER; 120 MINUTES EACH)

www.munster-records.com

Taking Spain one scummy band at a time



Spanish label Munster has been fomenting 'n' foisting garage and punk for a quarter century but, instinctively divining that to understand *real* trash ya gotta see it, too, has now entered the live DVD fray. Boy, has it ever. The batch at hand—

plus forthcoming titles from Nomads, Supersuckers, Bob Log III and more, all featuring pro sound and multicam mixes filmed in Madrid '06—fairly oozes bodily fluids.

Australia's long-running scum merchants the Beasts of Bourbon, for example, are in fine fetid form, singer Tex Perkins thrashing about like some unholy cross between Nick Cave and Jon Spencer while his bandmates churn up a swamp-skronk maelstrom on such delicate ditties as "Hard for You" and "Straight, Hard and Long." Detroit's glam/garage sex workers the Demolition Doll Rods aim for a visual aesthetic—two gals and one guy performing in bikinis and lingerie, natch—and you come away feeling deliciously unclean, in a mood to hump the nearest upright object. And Atlanta buzz-band the Black Lips, the most traditionally "garage" outfit here, get down and get sweaty; lo-fi sound for this one, but that's offset by close-ups of tight jeans-encased crotches.

Special features: Discographies, photo galleries, videos (in particular, the Beasts' vids from the '80s are crude, cruddy classics). FRED MILLS

SOLOMON BURKE

THE KING LIVE AT AVO SESSION BASEL

(MUSIC VIDEO DISTRIBUTORS, 75 MINUTES)

www.mvdb2b.com

One of the last true soul greats



For some inexplicable reason history will some day have to answer to, Solomon Burke, though a giant in the '60s R&B world, never quite crossed over to pop to the extent that peers like Wilson Pickett and Joe Tex did. But Burke, who's long dou-

bled as a Reverend—which may explain why bands like the Stones, who covered two of his songs, revered him—is one of few from that era still going and, if this spectacular 2003 Swiss performance is typical, he may just now be at the top of his game. Perched firmly but hardly motionless on his throne, decked out regally, clutching not only his microphone but a long-stem rose and a hanky to wipe the flow of sweat, Burke owns the stage. His voice, a little bit country, a little more church, even more soul, is still as forceful, as supersized, as he is. Mixing it up between hits (a wicked "Cry to Me"), classics ("Georgia on My Mind") and new material provided by Tom Waits ("Diamond in Your Mind") and Brian Wilson ("Soul Searchin'"), Burke is not just the living king of soul, he's its reigning ambassador.

Special features: Behind-the-scenes footage.

JEFF TAMARKIN

DO YOU BELIEVE IN MAGIC: THE MUSIC OF JOHN SEBASTIAN & THE LOVIN' SPOONFUL

(SRO ENTERTAINMENT, 65 MINUTES)

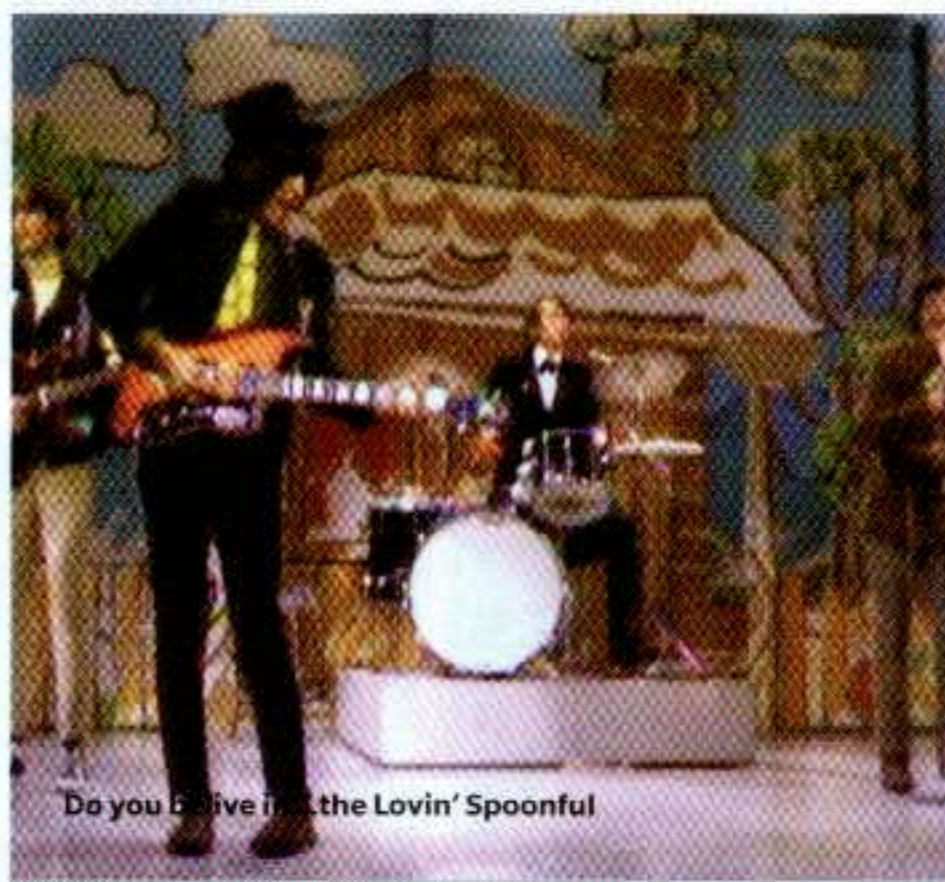
www.kultur.com

Magical hit factory tour



Both John Sebastian and this ostensibly made-for-television program have barely more spunk than a Mr. Rogers episode. But it's still, for those of us who hold the hit-making, feel-good sounds of the Lovin' Spoonful in high esteem or are casually

aware of these tunes that have so thoroughly permeated our culture, a nice guided tour through a healthy section of rock history. With Sebastian as host, we're taken through the inspiration and creation of the Spoonful's many hits (including its signature hit "Do You Believe in Magic?," based on an early Spoonful epiphany) and Sebastian's surprise



Do you believe in the Lovin' Spoonful

comeback number, "Welcome Back" (which you'd know as the theme to the classic 1970s sitcom *Welcome Back Kotter*). The songs and stories sandwiched between these two career milemarkers shed light on the band's inspiration and influence, but also put the songs into perspective, showing that the good feelings we get from them are the same that gave them birth.

Special features: Commentary, additional scenes, snippets of interviews with late Spoonful guitarist Zal Yanovsky and Steve Boone as well as the Mamas and the Papas' Denny Doherty. RANDY HARWARD

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