



DONOVAN *The Donovan Concert: Live in L.A.* (MVD Visual)

Of all the '60s pop icons, few artists have held onto their flower-power folk esthetic the way that Donovan has. The meditative studies the Irish singer-songwriter explored with the Beatles, actress Mia Farrow and Beach Boy Mike Love with a guru in India might have been a passing phase for some, but it seems to have stuck with Donovan to this day.

The Donovan Concert: Live in L.A., originally produced for PBS, was organized to raise funds for the David Lynch Foundation for Consciousness-Based Education and World Peace, a project on which the film director and Donovan and his wife, Linda, are collaborating.

The 17-track concert (four cuts appear as bonus songs) reveals some wear and tear on the Irish singer's voice, but Donovan has lost none of his charisma. Mike Meyers may have been sending up Donovan's brand of psychedelia in the "Austin Powers" movies, but as Woody Allen says, you can't fake sincerity.

Donovan evokes it in spades as he reprises his songbook, including "There is a Mountain" (the basis for the Allman Brothers Band classic "Mountain Jam"), Buffy Saint Marie's "Universal Soldier" and his quirky pop hits "Sunshine Superman" and "Mellow Yellow."

Love as well as Donovan's daughter, Astrella Celeste, appear as guest singers individually, and Donovan has a small backing band on some of the songs.

But he's most endearing sitting on the floor of the stage alone, strumming his guitar and invoking a sense of peacefulness and tranquility that for Donovan is more than a faded pipe dream from the '60s. Mellow indeed.

- Mike Cote