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Review by [Daniel Siwek](#) | posted November 20, 2008 | [E-mail the Author](#) | [Start a Discussion](#)

The Movie In February of 1968, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi welcomed The Beatles to his retreat in Rishikesh, northern India, in order to study Transcendental Meditation, a practice virtually unknown to most westerners at the time. A few weeks later Donovan visited the ashram with Mike Love of the Beach Boys and actress Mia Farrow, and while they left under suspicious circumstances there's no denying the importance of the trip. The Beatles left with a barrel of songs; George Harrison in particular became the Fab Four's spiritual icon. Donovan and Mike Love also incorporated these new ideas into their music, and they also became passionate advocates for Transcendental Meditation, or TM.

You don't have to trek to the Ganges in order to learn the benefits of TM, and that's why Donovan agreed to play a benefit concert for the David Lynch Foundation for Consciousness-Based Education and World Peace. The director of **Mulholland Drive** and other mind-bending films is trying get our kids to learn how to relax so we don't need to give them all these chill-pills. Taking place at the Kodak Theatre in Hollywood on January 21, it was almost forty years since that famous trip, but Donovan instantly takes you there with a song. Opening the show with "There is a Mountain," Donovan explains how the artists from the UK have a history of going down to Jamaica, which is where he came up with this song about the country's green plant life. The career-spanning was loaded with classics like "Catch The Wind," and for every



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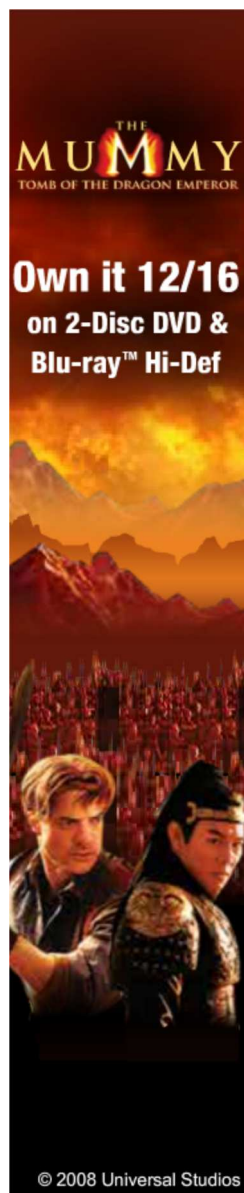
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song, Donovan not only gives you some back story, but reminds you of its cultural significance, not only with anti-war songs like "Universal Soldier," but with songs like "Happiness Runs," where he talks all about that famed trip to India. He says they only thing they took with them were their guitars, and referred to Mike Love as if he were another bloke named "Mick."

For the first few numbers it the singer is just getting warmed up, because while he's got the legendary vibrato, his voice is still quite timid, and not as controlled. By "Jennifer Juniper" he was in top form, and ready to swoon-over any girl named with a J. Next, he invited his daughter Astrella Celeste to sing one of her songs, "Dream," and while the moment was touching and the vibe was nice, they seemed a little unprepared for their duet (which some may find endearing in its own way). "Sunshine Superman" gets the crowd cheering again, and the track features some fine bongo playing by Stewart Lawrence. After a mysterious downer called, "Young Girl Blues," from 1973's *Cosmic Wheels*, he followed with more popular and even more eerie, "Season of the Witch." Before closing his set, Donovan went back to the story about that famous trip to India, and he's got no problem taking credit (with the Beatles and that Beach Boy) for introducing meditation to the western world. And as he brings his daughter back on stage, He invites that Beach Boy, Mike Love to sing "Mellow Yellow."

Before performing some encores, which included a new one called, "The Illusion," Donovan has David Lynch read a prayer for peace, and they get a standing ovation. The concert, was produced by Raven, directed by Doug Armstrong, and is distributed by MVD.

THE SETLIST

1. There is a Mountain
2. Catch The Wind
3. Colours
4. Try for the Sun
5. Universal Soldier
6. Happiness Runs
7. Jennifer Juniper
8. Dream
9. Sunshine Superman
10. Young Girl Blues
11. Season of the Witch
12. Hurdy Gurdy Man
13. Mellow Yellow
14. La Lena
15. Mexico
16. There is An Ocean

The DVD

Video: **The Donovan Concert: Live In L.A.** was shot on digital video and is presented in the widescreen format. There are enough cameras catching the action, and the mood lighting and visuals are nicely captured for the DVD.

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Sound: You have your choice of a regular stereo track or the 5.1 Surround Sound format. The sound is crystal clear, and a highlight was during Tom Mansi's double bass solo, which was as crisp as it was deep

Extras:

You can play the bonus songs alone, or if you prefer, you can listen to them all together.

Final Thoughts:

No matter what decade Donovan represents, his music is simply timeless. His songs are catchy and easy enough for you to remember them forever, and the way they make you feel is similar to the meditation practices the artist is hyping. It's true, he was largely responsible for bringing those techniques to the west, at the very least, to those western musicians that have incorporated the sounds over and over again. There are plenty of greatest hits out there, but this is one that you could watch, and it promotes a good cause.

Why are our days numbered and not, say, lettered? Woody Allen

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