



February 29, 2008

February 29, 2008

"The Donovan Concert: Live In L.A.," Donovan (MVDvisual, *½)**

This Jan. 22 DVD was recorded for PBS Jan. 21, 2007, at Hollywood's Kodak Theatre. Filmmaker David Lynch (his Foundation for Consciousness-Based Education and World Peace sponsored the special night) introduces Donovan along with a brief video/music montage.

Donovan is accompanied by concert bassist Tom Mansi and percussionist Stewart Lawrence, with a special appearance by his daughter, Astrella Celeste. The additional instrumentation on many of the hits (featured on the great Legacy box set "Try for the Sun" reviewed Nov. 18, 2005) is sometimes notable by its absence.

The biggest drawback, however, is Donovan talking rather than singing through many songs. His singing voice still seems supple and breathy, with a trademark vibrato that his daughter inherited. And his guitar playing is excellent.

Highlights include a well-orchestrated audience sing-and-clap-fest on "Happiness Runs," Lawrence's neat conga solo on "Season of the Witch," the stripped-down but still catchy "Sunshine Superman," "Mellow Yellow" and "Hurdy Gurdy Man," which is missing the neat backward-guitar parts but adds a verse from the late George Harrison.

Get your copy of this mellow flashback at Coast video/music stores or shop online at mvdvisual.com. And, check out the David Lynch Foundation at davidlynchfoundation.org.

- Ricky Flake