

Reviews

DVD Review

Bob Dylan

Bob Dylan

Don't Look Back: '65 Tour Deluxe Edition

Docudrama (NVG-9824) 2 DVDs, 2 Books
Grade: ★★★★★

With his hand-held camera, documentary filmmaker D.A. Pennebaker joined Bob Dylan's '65 tour of England. The result, *Don't Look Back*, became one of the first, if not the first, rockumentaries — a cinema verité travelogue whose cohesion beneath the fragmentation fit Dylan's surreal lyrics. Still performing solo with just an acoustic guitar and harmonica, Dylan was then emerging as the '60s prophet who claimed to have no answers. "I don't believe in anything," we watch him tell the press.

Cheaply shot in black and white, *Don't Look Back* is a telling glimpse into Dylan's world at a particular moment. Along with informal and on-stage song excerpts, we get the humor, the squabbles, the put-ons, the sarcasm and the adulation. Joan Baez's hotel-room rendition of his obscure "Percy's Song" leaves most of her '69 Dylan tribute *Any Day Now* in the dust. We also encounter Allen Ginsberg, Alan Price of The Animals, folkie expatriate Derrol Adams, Dylan's business-minded manager Albert Grossman and his wife Sally (the woman on *Bringing It All Back Home's* cover). Dylan's nervousness about competition from Donovan is palpable.

As for the film's famous cue-card-tossing "Subterranean Homesick Blues" opener, the deluxe \$49.95 package offers (along with a photo-laden paperback reprint of the film's 1967 companion book, whose song credits aren't always accurate) a small flip book of the song's video. The box's second DVD, *Bob Dylan 65 Revisited*, provides an alternate "Subterranean" shot on a rooftop with Dylan in a double-breasted coat) along with outtakes from the original documentary. *Revisited's* strong concert footage includes a surprisingly subdued "It's All Over Now, Baby Blue," while Dylan's friendliness to fans runs counter to the aloof mystique that's long surrounded him.

The two-DVD set's outtakes are much worthier than some expanded CDs are. But for budget-minded Dylanophiles, a



single DVD with only the original film (digitally remastered) is also available. Despite Dylan's and Baez's anti-establishment stances, there's an innocence to *Don't Look Back* that would soon be forever lost. Do look back.

— By Bruce Sylvester

Pink Floyd

Meddle: Classic Album Under Review

MVD Visual (823564509990)

Grade: ★★★

Critics, music journalists and a former member of Yes put 1971's *Meddle*, the album that preceded Pink Floyd's ascendancy to space-rock superpowers, under the microscope in the latest installment of MVD Visual's *Classic Album Under Review* series. While not dismissing the rest of *Meddle*, most of the conversation centers around "Echoes," the epic finale.

"San Tropez," the pastoral hymn "Pillow Of Winds," and even the classic tidal movements of "One of These Days" — all are prelude to the main event, but each song gets a thorough analysis. The commentary is sharp and thought-provoking, even if there are no interviews with anybody from the Floyd camp and the DVD spends too much time on the band's history. Mood and texture were hallmarks of *Meddle*. This is nowhere near as arty, but it is a substantial study.

— By Peter Lindblad

Hillbilly") and nowhere near country (T. Rex's "Life's A Gas"). The disc's banjo-inflected closing line — "They couldn't keep Jack from being happy," from The Who — embodies the fun-loving venture's vibe. Of course, The Who, too, have used a banjo on occasion.

The North Carolina trashabilly trio is no slouch instrumentally, but it's blissfully oblivious to musical boundaries.

Cheerful chorines add camp comedy to a revved-up "Wolverton Mountain." Innocent, or salacious, depending on how you interpret it, big-wigged Mary Huff's strong-voiced cover of rockabilly queen Wanda Jackson's "Funnel Of Love" gets a surf-guitar backup and bottom-of-a-well vocal finale.

Incidentally, "Wolverton Mountain's" predatory pater familias Clifton Clowers

was in reality co-author Merle Kilgore's uncle. The late Kilgore once told *Goldmine* that Clowers was, as the song said, "mighty handy with a gun and a knife" but actually a nice person. Sharpshooting Uncle Clifton wasn't offended when his young nephew Kilgore transformed him into a villain for the sake of a hit song lyric.

— Bruce Sylvester