

T O W E R R E C O R D S

P U N K S E !

July 1990[®]

Harry Connick, Jr.

Matinee Idol, or
Serious Jazz Musician?

PETER MURPHY

DEL AMITRI

JANN BROWNE

JULEE CRUISE

THE RAINDOGS

WEBB WILDER

ELEVENTH DREAM DAY

JERRY GONZALEZ

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Bela Fleck

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Amsterdam Guitar Trio

The 18-Stringed Wonder

The Flatlanders

Visionary Texas Country

Nitty Gritty Dirt Band Offers Circle Insight; Clapton Compiled; Danzig Rocks

MUSIC VIDEO
BY BARRY GUTMAN

Released last year, *Will the Circle Be Unbroken, Vol. II* by the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, won "country album of the year" hosannas from virtually every music publication, just as the first *Circle* album did in the early '70s. The recording features a plethora of guest artists: Bruce Hornsby, Emmylou Harris, former Byrds Roger McGuinn and Chris Hillman, the Band's Levon Helm, Ricky Skaggs, John Prine, John Hiatt, Rosanne Cash and Johnny Cash, to name a few. But, no matter how special the album may already strike you as being, your appreciation of it will increase dramatically after viewing the more recently released documentary of its creation, *The Making of Will the Circle Be Unbroken, Vol. II* (Cabin Fever Entertainment).

The 87-minute program alternates interviews with rehearsal snippets to give you a feel for what it was like to work on this unique project. It's fascinating, for example, listening to McGuinn and Hillman reminisce about how the Byrds lost their rock audience without gaining a country following upon the initial release of

their *Sweetheart of the Rodeo* album, featuring the first available version of "You Ain't Goin' Nowhere," updated here, or watching the Dirt Band and the New Grass Revival work out elaborate harmonies for "Don't You Hear Jerusalem Moan." There's also footage of 16 of the album's 20 songs being recorded live in the studio; some are seen and heard in their entirety, others in excerpts of various lengths, but, again, the video isn't meant to be a substitute for the album but, rather, a guide to better appreciate it.

The Cream of Eric Clapton (PolyGram Music Video) is skimmed, for the most part, off of several previously released home videos: a b&w lipsynched clip of "I Feel Free" on German TV in 1967 was originally included in Vestron Video's *MTV Closet Classics* compilation; "Crossroads," "Sunshine of Your Love" and "White Room" — only the last of which is in color — are lifted from Video Yesteryear's now-deleted *The Farewell Concert of Cream*; "Badge" and "Cocaine" are from Vestron's *Eric Clapton: Live '85*; "Holy Mother" from Vestron's live '86 *Eric Clapton and Friends* (featuring Phil Collins



DANZIG (L-R): JOHN CHRIST, CHUCK BISCUITS, GLENN DANZIG AND EERIE VON

on drums); "Tearing Us Apart," a driving duet with Tina Turner that's also from '86, is courtesy of MGM/UA Home Video's *The Prince's Trust All-Star Rock Concert*; the overly languid "Wonderful Tonight" featuring Dire Straits is from CMV Enterprises' *Nelson Mandela 70th Birthday Tribute*; and "Layla" is stitched together from various sources, including Live Aid. However, *The Cream* does open with a fascinating rarity: the Yardbirds performing the traditional blues shuffle "Louise" in 1964 on British TV. The program's most recent component is the conceptual clip for "Forever Man."

While the '60s material has more of an edge musically and is of significant historical interest, it's marred by in-and-out-of-focus "psychedelic" photography and directors who aimed their cameras anywhere but the fretboard during most of Clapton's solos. Also, the shift, after six numbers, from the '60s to the '80s is rather abrupt — couldn't the producers find any Blind Faith, Delaney & Bonnie, and Derek & the Dominoes footage to make this compilation a more thorough career overview? Oh, well, faults notwithstanding, this 75-minute program isn't bad, provided you don't own too much of its contents already.

The tattooed biker types in Danzig sure don't look like anyone I'd like to hang out with. Is, for example, ex-Misfit Glenn Danzig a violent person? "If I have to be, yeah. I don't have a problem with it either." And get this: "Satan's probably one of the most misunderstood characters in the Christian religion."

Obviously, the interview segments are the lowlights of the 45-minute *Danzig* (Geffen Home Video). And lots of people will have problems with the group's conceptual clips, also contained here, consisting of provocative imagery, including G-string-clad biker chicks ("She Rides"), the squeezing of blood from a pigeon onto a woman's body

("Mother") and worse; that's why they haven't been seen widely on TV and are gathered here, for the convenience of the group's fans.

At least the band has musical skills to validate its existence. Singer Glenn Danzig and guitarist Chuck Biscuits put in time on the punk circuit with the likes of the Misfits, Black Flag and the Circle Jerks, but their talents now reflect influences like Jim Morrison and Black Sabbath, as best demonstrated here by one live performance, "Twist of Cain." Frankly, Danzig is better heard than seen.

From the ridiculous to the sublime, we turn to *New Town: Bryan Ferry in Europe* (Virgin Music Video). This elegant film, codirected by Ferry and Peter Scammell, was made in December '88 to give a belated push to his most recent album, *Bete Noire*. *New Town* does indeed contain lots of noir-ish touches, from the high-tech opening montage of Paris settings, to the bathing of Ferry and company alternately in blue and white lights — the latter to accentuate color — throughout the concert. And, reflecting the way the different instruments constantly weave in and out of the instrumental mix, the cameras are ever busy, moving to wherever the different sounds call them.

Backed by six musicians (including Steve Scales, Neil Hubbard and Andy Newmark) and three female vocalists, Ferry offers energetic readings of several songs from his two most recent albums, notably "Down in Limbo," "Slave For Love" and "Don't Stop the Dance." Of course, there's also room for Roxy Music standards like "Avalon" and "Do the Strand." Don't let this excellent, otherwise unavailable performance escape you amid all the hoopla over the several Roxy and Ferry albums recently reissued on CD. ■



NITTY GRITTY DIRT BAND (L-R): JEFF HANNA, JIMMIE FADDEN, BOB CARPENTER AND JIMMY IBBOTSON

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