

## Taking (Wood)stock

By Gregg Shapiro

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Ang Lee's new movie "Taking Woodstock," about the legendary outdoor rock music festival hits movie screens later this year. This summer also happens to be the 40th anniversary of Woodstock.

To commemorate the occasion the triple LP "Woodstock: Music from the Original Soundtrack and More" (Cotillion/Rhino) has been lovingly reissued in a two-CD set, the packaging of which mirrors the original gatefold album. All of the legendary musical performances by Richie Havens, Joe Cocker, Arlo Guthrie, Jimi Hendrix (especially the "Star Spangled Banner"), Joan Baez, and Crosby, Still, Nash & Young, still have the power to elicit goose bumps. Additionally, Country Joe McDonald's "give me an F" "Fish Cheer" and the stage announcements (particularly the warning about the brown acid) are a time capsule unto themselves. The follow-up, "Woodstock Two" (Cotillion/Rhino) has also been reissued in a package faithful to the original.

As a member of CSNY, Graham Nash was fortunate enough to play Woodstock. But Nash had been making music long before joining David Crosby, Stephen Stills, and later Neil Young. The handsomely presented three-disc set "Reflections" (Atlantic/Rhino) traces Nash's trajectory, beginning with a trio of Nash co-compositions that he recorded as a member of The Hollies. From there, his work is represented by recordings with CSN, CSNY and a handful of CN collaborations. His solo work is also featured in more than two dozen tracks.

By the time Woodstock rolled around, George Harrison and the Beatles were approaching the end of their working relationship. In fact, Harrison was the first was the first of the Beatles to release a solo effort, in 1968. The single disc compilation "Let It Roll" (Capitol/Apple/Dark Horse) focuses on the period of 1970 to 2002, essentially drawing from the breakthrough "All Things Must Pass" set through his final release "Brainwashed." If I have one complaint, it's that the inclusion of live recordings of Harrison's Beatles comps appears to have pushed other worthy solo tracks, including "Crackerbox Palace," "You" and "Dark Horse," to the side, when they had

every right to be included on a "songs by George Harrison" retrospective.

Tommy James and the Shondells were probably considered to be too bubblegum to be invited to play Woodstock. Early singles such as "Hanky Panky" and "Mony Mony" might have done them in on that score. But "I Think We're Alone Now," recorded in the 1980s by mallrat Tiffany, got a real hipster seal of approval in the late 1970s when it was covered by Lene Lovich. In 1981, a few years after the Lovich remake, Billy Idol revived "Mony Mony" and Joan Jett did "Crimson and Clover," officially renewing interest in the band. "40 Years: The Complete Singles Collection (1966-2006)" (Collectors' Choice Music/Rhino) is a terrific anthology that includes the aforementioned hits, as well as "Crystal Blue Persuasion," "Say I Am," "Draggin' The Line" and much more.

Like Graham Nash and George Harrison, Richard Thompson put in time in an influential band prior to striking out on his own. It was in Fairport Convention in the 1960s that Thompson laid the groundwork for what was to follow. Thompson, who has been the subject of a few well-respected compilations gets the four-disc box-set treatment with "Walking On A Wire: Richard Thompson (1968-2009)" (Shout! Factory), which opens with a few Fairport Convention tunes. The set also includes a considerable dose of the brilliant material Thompson recorded with wife Linda (see "Down Where The Drunkards Roll" and "Dimming of the Day") and a healthy portion of his excellent later solo recordings.

You know the drill—a band is so ahead of its time that it never gets the full appreciation or recognition it deserves. And then, years later, they finally get the props that they so rightly deserved. Five discharged American soldiers who formed a band while in the service, Monks (all the way down to their haircuts) unknowingly paved the way for the punk pose way back in the mid-1960s on the expanded reissue of "Black Monk Time" (Light In The Attic). On songs including "Monk Time" (with its "I hate Viet Nam declaration"), "Shut Up," "I Hate You," "Complication," and "Blast Off!," Monks were unwitting, and now revered, trendsetters.



