

FULL MOTION VIDEO



feature



We all know that the CD32 can play some great games, but did you know that it can play movies as well? Jason Holborn gets all square-eyed with Commodore's new FMV module.





feature

Movies on your CD32? Is this Holborn chappie mad? Or is he simply referring to the good old tie-in lark, some software house paying a movie studio obscene amounts of cash to turn a blockbuster flick into a second-rate platformer that sells millions regardless of the fact that it's as exciting as a package holiday to Scunthorpe? (quick pause to catch breathe). No, far from it – after years of speculation and rumour, the bollocks have finally worked out how to squeeze a movie onto a compact disc. What's more, your CD32 is at the forefront of this technological leap.

Before you get all excited and try to cram that old VHS tape of *Carry On Camping* into your CD32's drive (a word of advice – the tape won't fit!), it must be stressed that a standard CD32 isn't capable of playing this new breed of 'VideoCD' films. The key to the CD32's role in this up-and-coming market is a £200 add-on recently launched by Commodore.

The FMV module may look like the dictionary definition of a boring little box, but the electronics inside are formidable. To produce those Full Motion Video movies there's a 40 MHz video decompression engine, backed up with a 28MHz Digital Signal Processor (DSP) solely responsible for decoding the audio. It's worth pointing out that although a VideoCD disk does contain a CD quality soundtrack, it's encoded along with the video signal. You cannot, therefore, play the sound track on a standard audio CD player or even a standard (non-FMV equipped) CD32.

Installing the FMV module is straightforward enough – after removing the plastic backing plate from the rear of your CD32, all you have to do is to slide the FMV module into the space beneath the CD32's own electronics until the FMV unit clicks into place. With the module now in place, your CD32 is ready to enter the new age of VideoCD.

SEEDY MOVIES

Playing a VideoCD disk is just as easy as playing an audio disk. All you have to do is to place the VideoCD disk into the CD32's drive and switch on. After a couple of seconds a menu screen appears listing all the MPEG tracks. Most movies have only two tracks – an introduction sequence (the movie company's own trailer) and the film itself.

Surprisingly, although only two tracks are available from this menu screen, most VideoCD films are actually split up into a whole series of tracks, each of which marks the beginning of a major sequence in the film. Although you can't make use of this feature from the menu screen, you can instantly access any available tracks whilst the film is running by pressing the two selection buttons on

the two far corners of the CD32's hand controller. This is one aspect of VideoCD that really leaves the standard VHS video deck for dead. Instead of having to haphazardly wind a video tape forward until you reach the section of the film that you want to watch, VideoCD gives you almost instant access.

The advantages of VideoCD don't just stop here, either. VideoCD films are far superior to the VHS counterparts for a number of very good reasons. For starters, the picture quality of a VideoCD title is miles better than any standard VHS video player I've had the displeasure of using. Even a decent SuperVHS video deck would be pushed to come close to VideoCD and then of course you've got the advantage of a CD quality sound track. The other great advantage of a VideoCD is the quality of its freeze frame – because VideoCD is digital, pausing a film produces a rock-solid image with none of the loss in picture quality you'd expect from a VHS video recorder.



SOUND IN MOTION

If VideoCD sounds like a dream come true, be warned it's not without a few flaws. It's certainly not going to spell the death of both conventional VHS videos and audio CD disks for quite a while yet. For starters, VideoCD is held back by the same limitations as normal audio CDs – you can't write to a VideoCD. Okay, so we've got used to this where audio CDs are concerned, but the big consumer electronics companies are fooling themselves if they think that we're suddenly going to dump our faithful old VHS videos now that VideoCD has arrived. After all, what would we record that episode of *Home & Away* on? Missing just a single episode of this fine example of Australian drama would drive me crazy!

I'm sure that it's only a matter of time before the same bollocks that have brought us VideoCD will come up with a recordable version. When such a device does arrive (at an affordable price, of course!), you can kiss goodbye to VHS – until then, however, I very much doubt that most people will ditch their VHS decks quite yet. Most people will probably prefer to use a VideoCD player in conjunction

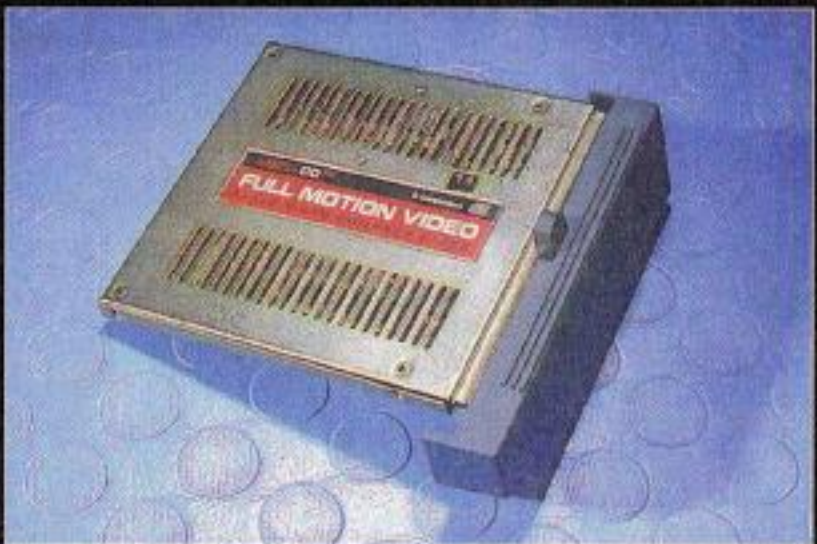
with a VHS recorder, allowing them to play prerecorded VideoCD films but still going back to VHS if the need arises (having to miss *Home & Away* to go to a party, for example). This is certainly what I've done!

VideoCD's also seem to be rather susceptible to dust and fingerprints, certainly more so than a standard audio CD. I guess it has something to do with the vast amount of information that is packed onto a VideoCD. It's therefore very important that you keep VideoCDs clean – if you permanently scratch a VideoCD disk then you might just as well throw it away as you'll never get it to play properly again!

THE FUTURE OF HOME ENTERTAINMENT?

Although Commodore are helping lead the way with their FMV unit, they certainly didn't invent the VideoCD standard. The electronics required to transform the CD32 into a VideoCD player is based around a chip set called 'MPEG-1' (MPEG is short for Motion Picture Experts Group) which has been accepted as an industry standard by virtually every consumer electronics company in the world. Technics has announced plans to develop VideoCD players, while both 3DO and Philip's CDi are to have add-on modules similar to Commodore's FMV unit. VideoCDs should play equally well on any of these units and this seems likely to ensure a reasonable level of support. Record companies in particular are quite excited about producing VideoCDs featuring their top groups. Techies are also quite excited about the prospect of games using FMV, although to be honest until software houses increase their support for CD32 specific games, the prospect of games developed for FMV module CD32s is remote.

All in all, the FMV is a remarkable piece of technology and should do CD32 sales no end of good – after all it's by far the cheapest way to play VideoCDs. If you've got the cash to spare and are interested in high quality movies then it's a bargain.



AT THE MOVIES

All this talk of how wonderful VideoCD and the CD-32's own FMV module is all well and good, but the success of VideoCD lies in the availability of VideoCD disks. Although it seems certain that most of the industry will put its money (or should that be products?) where its mouth is, VideoCD is going to have to gain acceptance from the consumer (that's us) if support is to remain in the long term.

The quality of VideoCD titles certainly doesn't seem to be a problem with most of the top movie studios and the music industry jumping onto the VideoCD band wagon wholeheartedly. Already big names such as Paramount, Disney and Columbia have expressed a commitment to VideoCD and it seems only a matter of time before the rest follow suit. If all goes well, we should see even blockbuster movies such as *Jurassic Park* eventually finding their way onto VideoCD - just think, you'll be able to hear the Tyrannosaurus's blood-curdling roar in CD quality!

The price of individual VideoCD titles could fluctuate between the various manufacturers but it seems that the industry may well eventually settle on a ceiling price of £19.95 with £15.95 being the norm. With most VHS movies costing £12.95, that extra £3 is definitely good value for money. ● JH



VIDEOCD FILM GUIDE

So you've got your FMV cartridge but nothing to show it off, other than a free demo disk showing Commodore's dreadful Xmas ad. Jason Holburn provides a run-down on the movies available now.

Top Gun

Tom Cruise stars along side Kelly McGillis in this rip-roaring adventure that sees Cruise set in the role of Maverick Mitchell, a daring young US Navy fighter pilot out to become the best.

Rating *****

Naked Gun 2 1/2

Leslie Neilsen stars in this sequel to the original *Naked Gun* that is packed with the same fatal combination of quick-witted one liners and the sort of visual gags that will make your cringe. (I thought this was tops! Priscilla's beaver has never looked better! - Art Ed.)

Rating ***

The Hunt For Red October

Although the 'Red Menace' was crumbling even as it was made, Sean Connery's charisma and excellent special effects ensured a box office bonanza for this gripping thriller about the defection of the USSR's most advanced nuclear submarine.

Rating *****

Patriot Games

What starts as a holiday for the Ryan family in England abruptly turns into a struggle for life as Jack Ryan (Harrison Ford) becomes entangled in a lethal terrorist attempt to kill members of the British royal family. With the terrorist plot foiled, Ryan finds that the IRA has a new target - himself and his family.

Rating *****

Wayne's World

Party on dude! Wayne and Garth may not be everyone's idea of the average American teenagers but they certainly know how to have fun. This film is absolutely dire.... NOT! Highly recommended.

Rating *****

Ghost

Who could possibly resist this tear jerker starring Patrick Swayze and Demi Moore? Get out your hankies, put on the kettle and get ready to sob your way through every minute of this timeless classic. (I think a NOT! is missing here - Ed.)

Rating *****

Indecent Proposal

Would you pay one million dollars to sleep with Demi Moore? And we do mean sleep, this dreary over long tale serving as a perfect cure for insomnia.

Rating **

Fatal Attraction

Fancy a bit on the side? After watching this movie you won't. Michael Douglas stars in this psychological thriller that sees him fighting back against the scorn of a jilted lover.

Rating *****

The Untouchables

Kevin Costner may have made a pretty awful Robin Hood, but he positively shines in this movie set against the backdrop of prohibition and mafia violence in 1930's America. Costner leads a special group of cops nick-named 'The Untouchables' as they attempt to bring about an end to Al Capone's grip on the windy city.

Rating *****

Raiders of the Lost Ark

The man with the hat is back and this time he hasn't brought his dad! Harrison Ford stars in this VideoCD version of the original Indiana Jones movie which sees Ford up against the might of the Nazi SS as they race to find the Ark of the Covenant.

Rating *****

Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom

Not exactly the best of the Indiana Jones movies, but *Doom* is rip-roaring stuff nonetheless. A definite must for all Harrison Ford fans.

Rating *****

Beverly Hills Cop

The storyline may be rather weak, but Eddy Murphy is as sharp as ever in this cops and robbers epic set in the glamour of Beverly Hills. As always, Murphy makes this film with his usual mixture of quick-witted one liners.

Rating *** (***** - Art Ed & Ed.)

Star Trek: The Motion Picture

This long, serious-minded adventure features state-of-the-art special effects by Douglas Trumbull (of *Blade Runner* fame) and really puts VideoCD technology to the test.

Rating *****

Star Trek 6: The Undiscovered Country

Bauhk hauck dauh (that's Klingon, you know!). With the Klingon race on the verge of extinction, Kirk and his crew attempt to bring peace throughout the galaxy. When both he and Bones are framed for a murder they did not commit, Spock steps in to save the day. ('Discovering' this movie was Kirk's biggest mistake since fusing Andrea's circuits - Ed.)

Rating *****

VIDEOCD STOCKISTS

All of these titles are available from Gordon Harwood Computers, New Street, Alfreton, Derbyshire DE55 7BP. Telephone 0773 836781.



MULTIMEDIA YOUR CD32

While multimedia is going down a storm in newspaper headlines, the reality is proving somewhat slower to catch up to the hype. In truth, even the most state-of-the-art products aren't that glamorous to watch. Microsoft's excellent PC movie program is best considered as a huge textbook with various hypertext words providing a clever and sophisticated interlinking of information. A review on *Star Wars*, for example, would mention Mark Hamill. Since the name would be highlighted you'd know it was hypertext - clicking on it would bring up more information, eg a biog on Mark Hamill with all his films providing further jumping off points to yet more information. The video clips people tend to enthuse about with multimedia last mere seconds - since a CD can only hold about 60 minutes of video there simply isn't the space for that much interaction, especially when you've got a sizeable program on the disk in the first place.

Castle Multi Media has taken a very different and considerably cheaper approach than Microsoft. Their entire range of ten multimedia releases are all compatible with any VideoCD player, whether it be a PC with MPEG card or a CDi or CD32 with FMV module. This flexibility is made possible because their releases have minimal interaction. All of the packages we've seen basically consist of a conventional TV program split into various chapters. Although you can skip between the chapters at will, it's best to watch them all the way through like a normal TV show.

At just £17.99 each the various packages will mainly appeal to people who've got an FMV already and want something new to show it off. While overpriced as documentaries compared to VHS, the new VideoCD movies are all at this price so it seems to be the going rate at the moment.

Castle Communications ☎ 081 9741021



Pavrotti: Nessum Dorma

As Pavrotti isn't exactly renowned for the acrobatic nature of his stage show, simply filming him before an orchestra in Milan doesn't possess much in the way of visual pyrotechnics. The



director seems content with alternating close-ups and crowd shots, doing little to entice non-Pavrotti fans. Yet despite this limitation, Pavrotti is actually a pretty good use of the format. With 60 minutes of footage and 16 different tracks, this

shows the potential for a video jukebox with the sort of rapid, direct accessing that's impossible with VHS. Unfortunately, neither CD32 nor PC CD-ROM formats will recognise the disk's CDi format indexing and index times are instead provided to allow for fastforwarding to the appropriate times.



D-DAY

If you still haven't overdosed on the Normandy landings, this MOD endorsed documentary provides yet more monochromatic footage of the world's biggest amphibious assault. A few colour diagrams break up the newsreel clips and information on the disastrous Bolero campaign which preceded D-Day is interesting.



History Of Aviation: Part I

This is a documentary the same as any you'd see on TV, albeit divided into segments to allow for accessing various sequences direct. Part One covers the period from the Wright Brothers to the period before WWII and is essentially a compilation of flickery black and white footage with your usual authoritative voice-over. While the camerawork is obviously basic, and there are occasional encoding glitches, some of the imagery is stunning. The Hindenberg tragedy is incredible (especially when you learn only 36 people died, with 56 somehow escaping) and there's lots of funny shots of quirky early aircraft. A prototype flying boat with tunnels to the engines, so they could be watched over by six engineers, was particularly worrying.



DINOSAURS!

This is undoubtedly the most ambitious of packages here, simply by virtue of the number of different sources of film clips. Besides talking head interviews with various experts, there's some



computerised animation, footage of life-like mechanised models and, best of all, clips from a Ray Harryhausen epic. *Jurassic Park* it's not and most of the stunning new facts - such as the dinosaurs being quite smart and possibly warm

blooded - have already been popularised by TV documentaries preceding the Spielberg film. Craig Charles' narration is also something of a distraction, it's such a distinctive voice you keep expecting him to slag off Rimmer or at least provide more humour than the rather dry script provides. Nevertheless with its colourful clips and always popular subject matter this is undoubtedly the best pick for entertaining youngsters.





VideoCD Future?



When Philips first began publishing movies for its CDi system there was a lot of controversy about the picture quality. Reports that the movies degraded badly during action scenes were put down to faulty encoding or conflicting standards. While the process of encoding continues to develop, as a year-old format we're now entitled to judge on what we see. All the disks reviewed here were finished, packaged copies running on a standard CD32/FMV set-up.

Upon firing up the player, a menu system appears which enables you to select which files you want to see, select the order in which you see them and access vital info - such as who wrote the song. As you'd expect of CD technology, accessing is virtually instantaneous and sound quality is top notch. All in all it seems the perfect system for pop videos, enabling you to playlist your favourite selection (omitting inevitable duffers) and even repeat tracks endlessly. This kind of jukebox-like flexibility simply isn't possible with VHS players and works brilliantly. Unfortunately, the Video part of the VideoCD equation is less than it could be. When the picture is taken from a recent recording and there's not much movement, the imagery is sharp and clean - rivalling VHS at its very best. Nor do you ever see the red blurring which is the constant bugbear of VHS technology. What you do get is significant degradation whenever there's a rapid movement of large objects on-screen.

For all the hype surrounding the magic of MPEG, at heart it's nothing more than a slideshow of digitised, hi-res frames of film. Running this amount of information through your CD32 requires incredible processing power. The extra memory and custom chips of the MPEG upgrade help, giving it exactly the same performance as a CDi, but it's still incredibly demanding. A key part of the MPEG system is that rather than dumbly redrawing the whole screen every frame, it concentrates on changes between frames. When those changes are minimal this works perfectly and the level of detail can be stunning. But when changes are more dramatic, such as during Bowie's acrobatics in *Time Will Crawl*, those changing elements become blocky and even occasionally break-up. Moreover, imagery from old videotapes which was blurry to begin with, crawls with a distinctly computery haze in the VideoCD version. Nor is the problem due to dodgy Commodore hardware - performance was exactly the same on a CDi player.

VideoCD is undoubtedly very clever technology, but its performance is variable and unlikely to seriously trouble VHS - which is cheaper, has far more titles and is recordable. However enthusiasts claim the VHS comparison is best avoided. Because VideoCD is a standard across so much hardware - PC CD-ROM, CDi, 3DO and even specific players - its price will fall rapidly and software pricing decrease as its variety grows ever larger. Thousands of PC orientated titles are apparently due this Xmas, but potential purchasers should definitely try before they buy.

Kate Bush: The Whole Story '94 PMI, \$19.99. 80 mins. (2 CDs)

Right from the start of her career, Kate Bush has had a very strong opinion on how to present her work visually. The ethereal waif from *Wuthering Heights* is unlikely to be ever forgotten, while in the mid-Eighties with *The Hounds Of Love* LP she began directing videos herself - culminating in *The Red Shoes* movie which was in collaboration with Peter Richardson. Unfortunately while the ideas are striking, the execution is variable and some of the 'bonus' tracks are rather weak. Still there are some very good videos, and the music is consistently brilliant.

KATE BUSH THE WHOLE STORY '94



PMI PARADE

On the negative side the fast-accessing benefits of VideoCD is balanced by variable encoding quality. Early poor quality recordings don't benefit from the new system, blurriness becoming blockiness on occasion. More recent videos are much better, but fast movement results in a certain jerkiness at times.



Bowie: The Video Collection PMI, \$19.99. 108 mins. (2 CDs) PG.

Because of the strength of the Bowie collection this was one of the first we used to test the system. While faults in the early videos could partially be blamed on the poor quality of the original recording, there can be no excuses for newer material. *Time Will Crawl* (1987) begins promisingly, but when there's fast movement the imagery becomes distinctly blocky, the whole screen swarming with artifacts. Unsurprisingly, the deliberately grainy *Day In Day Out* and the

BOWIE THE VIDEO COLLECTION



black and white *As The World Falls Down* work best. Still, as video collections go, this has to be one of the biggest and (artistically) most consistent, with a slew of brilliantly innovative landmark videos from the stunning *Life On Mars* to the extraordinary *Ashes To Ashes*. No *Tin Machine* though, which is a shame. Seriously.



Queen: Greatest Flicks I & II
PMI, £24.99. 137 mins. (2 CDs)

Alongside Bowie, with whom there's the visually disappointing collaboration *Under Pressure*, Queen must stand as the most consistently inventive and ambitious of British video producers. With Queen the opening bars of their classic songs usually call to mind classic videos, *Radio Ga-Ga's* massed crowds, *I Want To Break Free's* playful cross-dressing and the pomp of *Bohemian Rhapsody* - arguably the world's first pop video. Even very early concert videos are impressive due to Mercury's outrageous showmanship and professional production. It's pricier than the rest, but there's 33 tracks (including some not on VHS yet) and a proper booklet included.



Technically this seems above average with most of encoding done from good source tapes, however just like every other VideoCD we've seen fast movement invariably produces a certain blockiness.



Tina Turner: Simply The Best '94
PMI, £19.99. 97 mins. (2 CDs)

Despite having a career considerably longer than most of the other artists here, Tina's use of videos came comparatively late - waiting until her surprise *Private Dancer* resurrection in the mid-Eighties. Material prior to this is limited to some black and white footage mixed into a new version of her best known pre-80s hit, *Nutbush City Limits*. The discography actually begins with *Private Dancer*, and all the tracks begin from there. While there's probably more albums than you imagine (6 including live and compilation albums), it's still not a huge body of work to draw on, with few memorable videos, many drawn from the live performances which can hardly compare with the pyrotechnics of say Queen or Bowie. Also, a propensity for fast panning close-ups of Tina's face plays all sort of havoc with VideoCD at times. Overall, fans will love it, but appeal beyond that is limited.



Pink Floyd: In Concert. Delicate Sound Of Thunder
PMI, £19.99. 95 mins. (2 CDs)

Renowned for the most spectacular and extravagantly expensive concerts around, *Delicate Sound Of Thunder* provides a glimpse of the current state of the art in concert pyrotechnics. That said even the most expensive lasers and fireworks don't really have the impact on screen as they do when you're there. The best concert videos, such as Jonathan Demme's Talking Heads classic, rely on a strong act by the performers themselves. Since Pink Floyd prefer to mostly hide



behind the lasers, hunched over their various instruments, this isn't the most dramatic experience. Segments from various videos projected during the show are interweaved with live footage, but as these



include such exciting visuals as a man rowing a boat don't expect to be bowled over. Still, if you're a fan this is immaculately produced and, as you'd expect of Pink Floyd, the live sound quality is excellent with tracks occasionally markedly different from LP versions. Moreover with so little dramatic movement, VideoCD is in its element.

One Small Step
Castle Communications, £19.99. 90 mins. (2 CDs)

The 25th anniversary of the first moon landing has filled the papers with Apollo stories so this is a well timed release. After some famous footage of an Apollo launch and JFK's famous speech announcing the project, we go back to the birth of the rocket in 12th century China. After the dry academic stuff we get into the mostly familiar American space program via its roots in Germany's V2 program. Sadly, the Russian program is reduced to the sidelines despite its





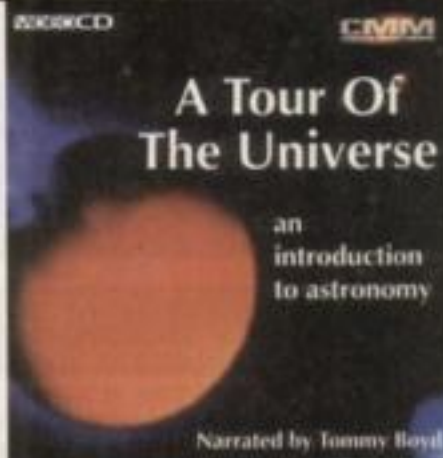
> amazing achievements. The first satellite, animal and man in space were records accomplished by Russian scientists, not expatriate Germans, and came despite the country's vast losses in WWII. The narration, by Tom Baker, is uninspired in its content but nevertheless for space buffs the wealth of official NASA footage is consistently interesting, with a high point being the gauges showing the heart-beat of Ham - America's first chimp in space - when the rocket engines are ignited!



Like all the Castle output this is simply a conventional documentary put on VideoCD. The ability to access various segments is of less use than with pop video compilations, but the excellent freeze-frame facility is good fun. Encoding is generally slick with old movie footage rarely testing the system.

A Tour Of The Universe
Castle Communications, £17.99. 60 mins. (1 CD)

Astronomy isn't perhaps the most exciting of sciences. Even the recent Shoemaker-Levy Jupiter explosions seemed little more than a few burry pics. Designed as an introduction to astronomy *Tour* mixes a few neat rendered sequences with some dull textbook diagrams and unimaginative



panels of static photos. The narration lacks the zest and focus of say Carl Sagan's *Cosmos*, but there's enough interesting facts to keep youngsters interested in the subject amused and once again encoding is rarely pushed to the limit.



Electric Disc: Sex Model File
Electric Disc, £19.99. 72 mins. (1 CD) 18

The idea of spying on 'glamour' magazine shoots may seem appealing to most young males, but the thrill wears off surprisingly quickly. For the most part watching the girls clinically move between the various poses is more embarrassing than anything else, the essential silliness of the whole business perfectly demonstrated by the unimaginative presentation. On the whole harmless, unless anyone's fooled by the 18-rating into thinking there's anything important here.



Coming Soon

Planes, Trains & Automobiles
Philips, £17.99. 2 CDs.

While lacking the outrageous brilliance of *The Man With Two Brains* or *Roxanne's* sheer class, this is still one of Steve Martin's better movies. Playing a buttoned-up traveller it's his misfortune to get lumbered with super-slob John Candy. Lots of laughs, but probably not a keeper.

Goldfinger
Philips, £17.99. 2 CDs.

According to purists this is probably the best Bond ever, Sean Connery turning in a near-perfect performance within a tight, well thought out plot (for a Bond movie). Expect the rest to follow very shortly. ■

Video CD Update

Video-CD titles are flooding out for Christmas, and whilst Philips are continuing their launches of well established hits, CD Vision are trawling the lakes of obscurity and cultdom to bring forth a wide range of diverse titles, just a few of which are reviewed below. Whilst most of their titles are more of novelty value at the moment (although the Chris Tarrant home movie compilation falls some way short of that low status) some genuinely exciting stuff is on the way to build on the cult success of *Turkish Dreams*, reviewed below. For cinephiles the imminent *Redemption* films are particularly welcome.

On the downside CD Vision's encoding isn't entirely compatible with CD32-style MPEG. The company claim they meet the MPEG standard, but are mainly focused on CDi and PC CD-ROM so their discs aren't checked out for Commodore's system. Glitches surface on several VideoCD titles with the sound going out of synch. Multi Media Machine pointed the problem out to us, and it's probably worth checking when ordering other titles by mail order if titles are entirely CD32 compatible.

Police Stop Or We'll Shoot!

CD Vision, £12.99, 45 mins, 1 CD U

"When the Texas Rangers say stop, they mean stop or we'll blow your ***** head off!" Great cover line, and although it's a measly 45 minutes long, you might be tempted to fork out thirteen notes to see loads of bad American drivers blown away. Sadly, on the evidence of this selection of police recordings (every potential incident is taped from the hood of the police cars), the Texan Rangers are a bunch of pansies. One of the more exciting chase sequences is of



a pair of young gentlemen relentlessly chased at 100mph until their engine packs up... all for throwing a Coke can out of the window. Texas is hard on litter louts.

The picture quality is fairly poor, since 100% of the footage comes from police issue bonnet cams (why doesn't a deputy pop up with a handheld to capture that pistol whipping at close quarters?), and as well as being fairly monotonous, deep feelings of nausea are soon induced by the crazy driving skills of the fat, drawling Rangers. I can understand the popularity of the British Stop videos, as it's much more interesting to watch idiots you might know getting chased on the M1. But since America is TV and movie land, and we're accustomed to edited, tailored road carnage of the highest calibre (*Smokey and The Bandit* - a classic example), this tedious slice of reality fails to excite, and reinforces that old Mark Wynne adage, that truth is rarely stranger than fiction, and always needs to be edited down to five seconds snatches.

★★ stars

Return Of The Dragon -

Bruce Lee Fights Back From The Grave

CD Vision, £12.99, 90 mins, 2 CDs 18

Whilst the cover illustration might deceive you into believing this to be a newly discovered flick starring the high kicking icon himself, a careful squint at the credits reveals the star to be a certain Bruce K. Lea, whose only relation with the big man himself is that they were both called Bruce by their



mothers. Fair enough then, this is a silly exploitation flick, with the Bruce bonus playing a student of the boss himself on a mission to find out just why his teacher popped his clogs. But sadly, it's all rather poor, with woeful acting, little narrative and nowhere near enough scrapping to entice beat-'em-up fans. This does have some merit as a comedy though, with THE WORST dubbing ever (even the phone rings before it should - "Hello! This is Bruce..."RING RING). By the end of the movie, it seems the soundtrack is a whole minute behind the action. Pretty avoidable stuff then, particularly as Bruce K. can't whup ass anyway near as enjoyably as the big Lee himself.

★★ stars (one star for the phone)

The Blue Note - Too Hot For MTV

CD Vision, £12.99, 60 mins, 1 CD, 18

Promising or what! Eleven uncut videos, originally banned from MTV (supposedly) but joyfully collected onto this sizzling CD for your entertainment. Of course, you'd expect the chart topping bands responsible for these salacious promos to be plastered across the front of the box... or maybe the back... fine print on the inlay perhaps? Well they're not, and a person with above average intelligence may interpret this lack of promotional



hype as a clue to terminal sadness, a hideous conspiracy to dupe horny young lads with eleven stupid videos by bands you've never heard of. And you'd be right. All the songs are bland, AOR pap, sung by 55 plus old goats in cowboy boots who don't look sure what's going on. Thematically, these three-minute sparkles of pop are identical, in that they all feature an attractive babe gradually losing her

clothes. There's seldom a reason given for this carefree abandon, but they do look rather tasty, especially with the sound turned down.

If I was a miserable old cynic, I'd say that all of these videos were knocked up simultaneously, by one production team, with sad, nowhere to go, can't say no bands with no MTV airplay planned, but just enough soft sex to release a themed package. Main clue? There's one railway line that appears on nine of the videos. Suspicious, eh?

The picture quality is fine, but, disastrously, there's no track selection available, it's just one sixty minute chunk, so if you do find a horny video to analyse in detail (or, heaven forbid, a good tune), you'll need one hand free to press fast forward for a while. Desperate stuff.

★ star



Chris Tarrant's Crazy World Of Home Videos

CD Vision, £12.99, 52 minutes, 1 CD, U

The home videos in question appear to have been filmed by some of the most bored people in the world, capturing an enormous range of homely events gone awry, but sadly very few that could be deemed funny. Classic snatches of wacky humour include a man being filmed whilst seated on his toilet (he's annoyed when he sees the camera-man), the usual collection of idiots falling off their bikes, the essential tot on the potty (oops, he's fallen in), not to mention the required bride falls over at the wedding taking everyone with her, ad infinitum (well, just 52 minutes). Whilst I've no objection to the Beadle style collection of family misfortunes in principle (they can be very funny, particularly when someone's really hurt), this Tarrant presented fiasco features the kind of rubbishy clips even Beadle would be hard pressed to broadcast. Crap quality, endless slow-mo repeats to pad out the running time and a completely witless dubbed commentary by the twit himself, this is a most unpleasant package. This is the complete Christmas parcel for the person you hate most in the world.

No stars.



Turkish Delight

CD Vision, £12.99, 101 mins, 2 CDs, 18

Whilst it's understandable that the majority of Video-CD titles should be re-releases of established movies or cheap compilations of esoteric subject matter, it's much more fun when companies dig up rare, cult films that have so far slipped the net for commercial release. This adaptation of the best selling Dutch novel is an outrageous rite of passage saga, an alternately bland and bitter analysis of a young man's innumerable infidelities on the road to self-discovery. Rutger Hauer plays the satyr sculptor, who wanders around with his fly permanently unzipped, raging against the banality of society with the chosen weapon of his manhood. But whilst this cult shocker is entertaining for the wildly over the top performance of Hauer, it will



be most appreciated by fans of Dutch director Paul Verhoeven, who takes the philosophically charged novel and lays on a tonne of religious symbolism and sexual violence that were to dominate his two following landmark films, *Flesh & Blood* and *RoboCop*. Those not inclined towards bohemian rhapsody may find this disjointed movie an occasionally shocking blast of eurotrash, but cinephiles will relish the opportunity to savour this brave stab against mainstream movie making. The encoding adequately copes with the poor quality original film stock, but as with most Video CD titles, the inability to skip sections, as is possible on more sophisticated CD machines, is frustrating. Phobics of male genitalia mutilation beware the infamous trapped member and pliers scene. It hurts.

★★★★ stars



Ghost

Phillips, £19.99, 121 mins, 2 CDs, 15

The sleeper hit of 1990, this has a harder edge to it than the hype surrounding its phenomenal success would have you believe. A more commercial variant on the spiritual conundrum that obsesses screenplay writer Bruce Joel Rubin, this is less unsettling than his masterpiece of the same year, *Jacob's Ladder*, but the Oscar *Ghost* won him was well deserved, the script skilfully tackling big issues with succinct dialogue and action and



immensely likeable performances from the previously lightweight Moore and Swayze. *Dirty Dancer* Swayze, in particular, has never been more impressive, injecting the rather morbid role of a dead, impotent lover with a degree of seriousness and angst previously unhinted at in his superficial oeuvre. The story is tightly outlined by Jerry Zucker, and the fetish settings Rubin relishes, such as the

dark, deserted subways underneath America and the misfits of society that populate it are beautifully directed. Similarly, the many special effects are excellently integrated so that they don't distract from the story, yet still convince. Only at the end does it falter, lapsing into 'Heaven is a bright light' cliché, but until then, *Ghost* is a beautifully constructed movie that has not been bettered since as a genuinely interesting and emotionally engaging mainstream movie.

The coding is excellent throughout, and the widescreen ratio adds a touch of class, but this really needs a big screen to appreciate Zucker's skilful compositions and Swayze's engaging breakthrough lead role (although a small TV does have the advantage of constraining the wildly exuberant Miz Goldberg, who really seems to be in a different movie to her co-stars). There'll always be one sad sack who'll pummel its unashamed sentimentality (such as my publisher (it's appalling! - Asst. Pub.)) but take my word for it that few will be unconvinced by this lush, mega picture:

★★★★ stars



Black Rain

Phillips, £19.99, 120 mins, 2 CDs, 18

Whilst the cinematic release of this Ridley Scott thriller was overshadowed by the debatable racism plaguing the script, viewed again, it's a surprisingly entertaining and brilliantly photographed noir. Michael Douglas reworks his old *Streets Of San Francisco* act with a rougher, hard-smoking 18-rated edge, while his soon-to-be-sacrificed partner is a ridiculous, but entertaining caricature of all that the East are supposed to envy of the West. The chief weakness of the movie is the non-development of the Kate Capshaw character; as an essential femme fatale she's poorly sketched and irrelevant to the plot. This weakness is partially redeemed by Ken Takakura, who plays the Japanese



cop drawn to Douglas's blithe disregard for bureaucracy. He plays the role better than I suspect it was written, and adds a degree of integrity that lifts this rather lightweight, though extremely violent diversion. It's a curiously pointless movie in the ever more unfocused career of Ridley Scott (1492 anyone, for a feel good blast at the movies?) but still entertaining enough. Another Phillips release and again, superb encoding make this a welcome treat for genre fans, and showing the Garcia death sequence to someone who hasn't seen it before will always cast a silence over the room.

★★★★ stars

Mark Clive Wynne

CD reviews

So you've read what the makers have to say. Now our much travelled reporter Derek Dela Fuente takes a look at some of the great titles on offer from CD Vision. Whether it's humour, action, music or documentaries that you're after, there's almost certainly something in the collection to satisfy your cravings. Right, over to you then, Derek!

SACHMO CD Vision

There are few people in this country - or indeed throughout the world - who will not recognise that name. Louis Armstrong embodied twentieth-century American culture. He revolutionised the world of music and became one of the America's most popular and influential entertainers. No other performer of his era had such a profound effect both as a singer as well as an instrumentalist. This eighty-six minute film is the most diverse portrait to date of Armstrong.

With over a dozen of his classic performances ranging from 1932 to the late sixties, Satchmo includes excerpts from *Pennies From Heaven*, *Betty Boop* cartoons, *Atlantic City*, *Going Places*, *Jam Session*, *New Orleans* with Billie Holiday, *High Society* with Bing Crosby, and *Hey Dolly* with Barbara Streisand. The film also includes numerous live concert and television appearances with Dizzy Gillespie, Jack Teagarden and the All Stars and the world tour that took him to Africa in 1956.

Never-before-seen home movies and newly-discovered footage from a Chicago nightclub in 1935 combine to make this a most intimate and loving portrait of Louis Armstrong.

On-camera interviewees are: Arvell Show, Tony Bennett, Wynton Marsalis, Dexter Gordon, Dave Brubeck, Iola Brubeck, Lester Bowie, Milt Gabler, George Avokion, Milt Hinton, Bud Freeman, Marty Napoleon, Joe Muranyi, Doc Cheatham, Barrett Deems, and Zilner Randolph.

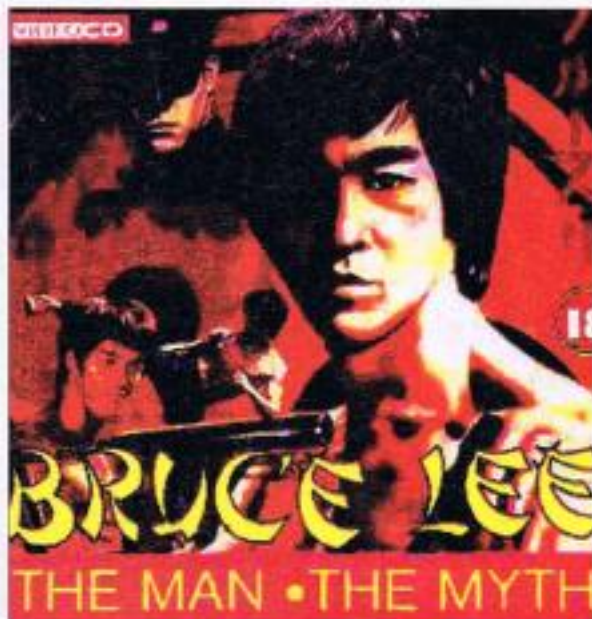
The soundtrack features classic digitally remastered Columbia Records and original Okeh master recordings, including the ground-breaking *West End Blues*, *Potato Head Blues*, *Heebie Jeebies* and *Weather Bird*. Also included are *Struffin With Some Barbecue*, *Blue Turning Grey*, *On The Sunny Side Of The Street*, *When You're Smiling*, *Mack The Knife*, *What A Wonderful World* and many more.

Narrated by Hattie Winston. Satchmo is based on the book by Gary Giddins. Price is £14.99 - and worth every penny.

THE OUTLAW CD Vision

Arriving on two CDs, this is a classic black and white film produced and directed by the eccentric genius, Howard Hughes. This was the film which

My friends, this one was worth the entrance fee alone! Satchmo, the life of Louis Armstrong, is a two disk tour de force that looks at "Pops" through words and music.

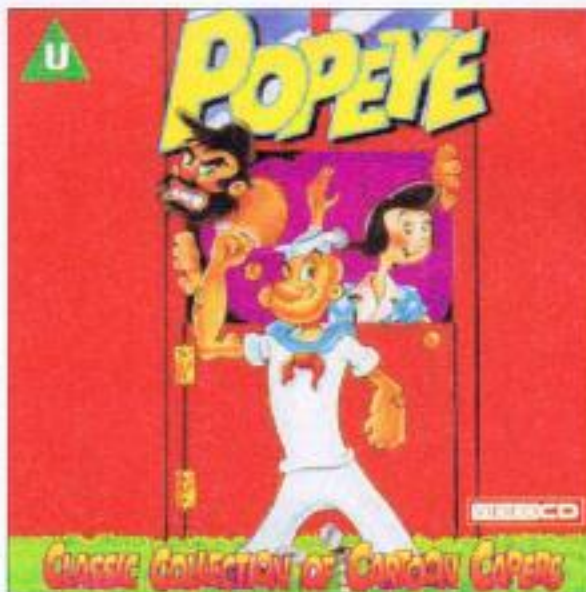


acted as the introductory vehicle for Jane Russell. A classic film that is full of action, suspense and thrills, it surrounds those well known characters Billy The Kid and Doc Holliday. These two bad men of the west argue it out with guns and fists over the beautiful Jane.

Technically, the MPEG coding is very good indeed and the sound has never been better on this oldie, but goody. Running time is 114 minutes. The price is £12.99.

POPEYE CD Vision

Here's classic batch of cartoons for the kids... and I mean classic! Some of these samples are a ripe old age, but they're all the better for it. Cartoons include *Aladdin and his Wonderful Lamp*, *Ancient History*, *I Don't Scare*, *Floor Flusher* plus a few more. Running time is around 60 minutes which ain't at all bad for a single CD, price is £9.99.



SARAH VAUGHAN THE DIVINE ONE CD Vision

With many interviews from her colleagues and friends, including Billy Eckstine, this single CD profile on Sarah Vaughan is a must for all of her fans. It includes words from the lady herself, many of her songs played over her career, including rare TV broadcast material featuring: *Misty*; *You're Not the Kind*; *Send in the Clowns*; *Cherokee*; *Once in a While*; *The Nearness of You* plus a host of others. Priced at £14.99.

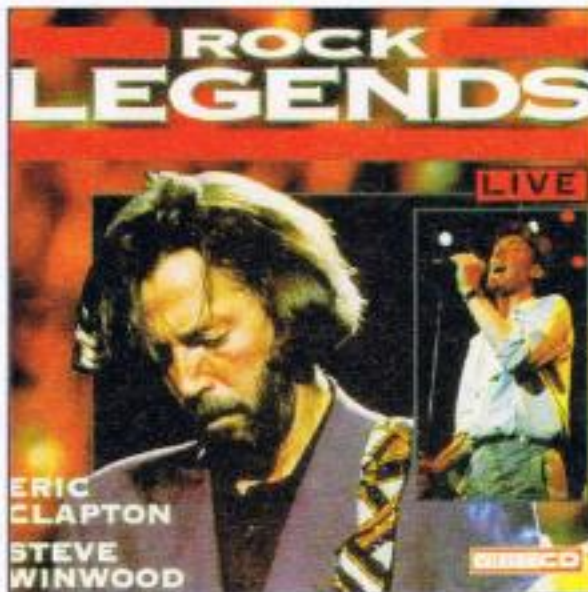


There's CDs to cater for a wide range of musical tastes, be it the good times of Louis Armstrong, the power of Pavarotti or the sultry, middle-of-the-road tones of our Sarah.

CD reviews

ROCK LEGENDS : LIVE CD Vision

This single disk production actually sounds a little veiled. That is, I would guess that the original source, which has to have been a video tape, has degraded a little. Don't get me wrong, the show is a good one for fans, the music is good, but the whole thing lacks some emotion. That takes nothing away from the disk, which should be viewed as a historical musical document (featuring Clapton, Winwood, Charlie Watts, Jeff Beck, Bill Wyman, Kenny Jones, Ray Cooper, etc) a rare collection of famous musicians collected together for a unique concert. Priced at £12.99



tainly not for the squeamish! But what really makes them stand out from their so-called rivals is that, unlike other contemporary magicians, they have no problems about revealing the secrets behind many of their illusions! If you've ever wanted to know how many of the more impressive illusions are really done, then you'll be in for a treat.

This video was recorded live on stage, and presents, amongst other tricks, someone being split into three, a man driven over by a truck and the duo appearing on stage out of nowhere. As well as the gruesome two-some, the show also features a couple of guests in the shape of American comedienne Jane Curtin and Victoria Johnson. If the names don't ring a bell, you'll almost certainly recognise them when you see them.

Okay, their sense of humour may be slightly warped, but I loved all 50 minutes of this CD. You'll be impressed by their technical achievements when you realise how some of the tricks are done, and you'll be left in awe over the secrets they don't give away.

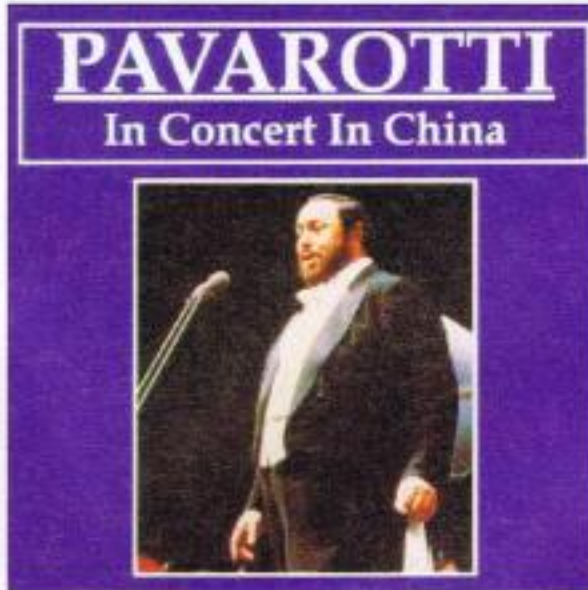
Both the picture and sound quality are well up to scratch considering CD Vision's method of encoding. The only irritant being the pauses in the video that are obviously for the US market so advert breaks can be inserted with a minimum amount of effort. Priced at £12.99

PAVAROTTI IN CONCERT IN CHINA CD Vision

Ahh, Luciano. The great man is seen in the Exhibition Hall Theatre of Peking throughout this two disk set.

The concert takes you through a variety of Operatic favourites and orchestral pieces. The production, on the whole, is handled well with some interesting camera shots and angles providing alternative perspectives to the performance not normally seen on terrestrial TV. However the camera work does become a little bit OTT at times. For example, the over use of Burst and Starlight filter shots does border on the '70s pop video at times. However, these irregularities are few and far between and the performance makes you forget about all it anyway.

Pavarotti is on sparkling form. For example, his Cilea - from L'Arlesiana, Fedrico's Lament tugs at the heart. Pavarotti throws himself into the emotion of the piece leaving you exhausted at the end. Beautiful stuff. (Calm down Derek, it's only a fat bloke in a dinner jacket! — Miles). Price is £14.99



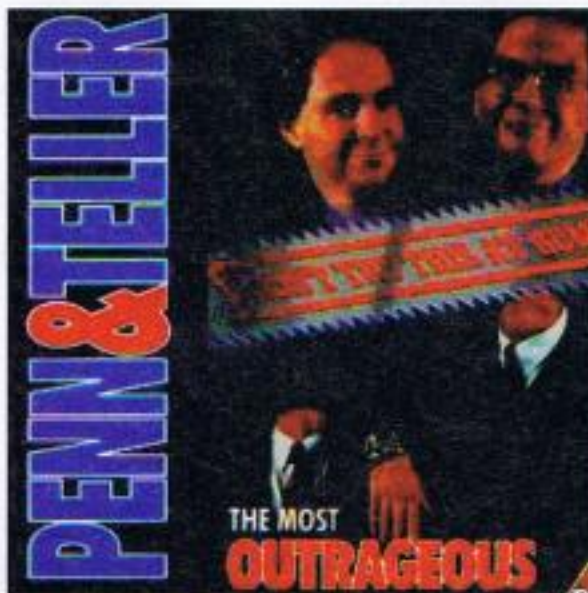
DAFFY DUCK & FRIENDS CD Vision

Any fans of Warner Brothers cartoons would no doubt be looking forward to this disc with keen anticipation, myself included.

The title is a little misleading. What you have is 60 minutes and eight Warner Brothers cartoons, four of which feature Bugs Bunny, three Daffy Duck and the remaining cartoon is Casper The Friendly Ghost. Wouldn't Bugs Bunny And Friends have been a more accurate title? Unfortunately, this is one of the CDs I have encountered that suffers from the compatibility problems I have outlined and can't be played back no matter what method you try. Throughout the video, the dialogue and sound effects are out of synch by about a second. While you may think that cartoons can cope with this, it became very disorienting to watch when sound effects were happening after the corresponding events on screen. Also, one of the cartoons cuts off about 15 seconds before the end. Oh well.

PENN & TELLER DON'T TRY THIS AT HOME CD Vision

For those of you, like me, who have more than a passing interest in magicians then this CD is for you. If you've never heard of them before, Penn & Teller are an American magic partnership with more than a marginal inclination to the macabre side of this branch of the performing arts. Basically, Penn & Teller are cer-



BEYOND THE LAW CD Vision

Former martial arts champion turned actress, Cynthia Rothrock, makes her first appearance on Video CD. This is a typical, run-of-the-mill, low budget Japanese martial arts movie. Cynthia plays Cindy, an FBI agent

sent to Hong Kong in pursuit of a mobster, who has turned informer and has taken a microfilm with him, which could bring down the entire mob.

Acting is of the standard you would expect from such a film (dire). Another hindrance to the film is that virtually all of the dialogue was recorded in Japanese and then dubbed into English. To be blunt, the actors chosen to dub the film don't seem to fit the characters properly.

With saying that, this is one of the few films tested from CD Vision that plays back perfectly with the FMV card, although because the dialogue is dubbed it's all out of synch anyway! The picture quality isn't incredible, although I'd say that that can be attributed more to the film's production rather than the encoding.

A laughably bad film, the action is obviously staged - it almost makes the Power Rangers look good! For die-hard martial arts fans only. On sale at £12.99

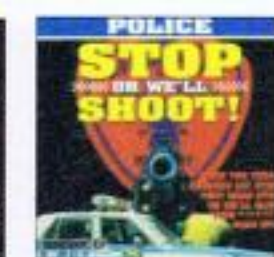
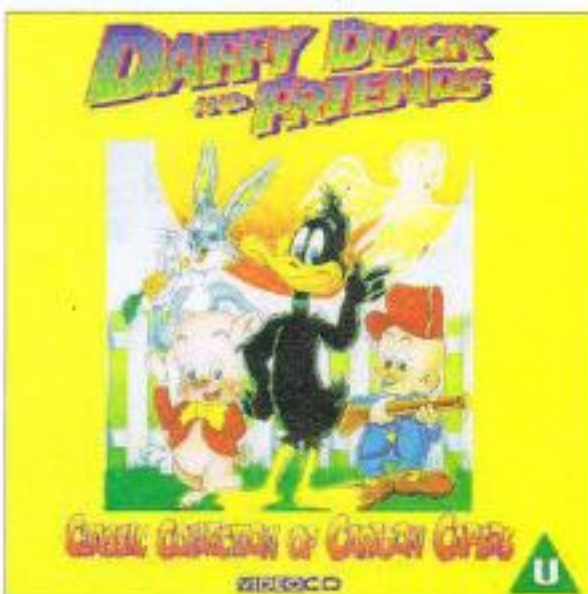
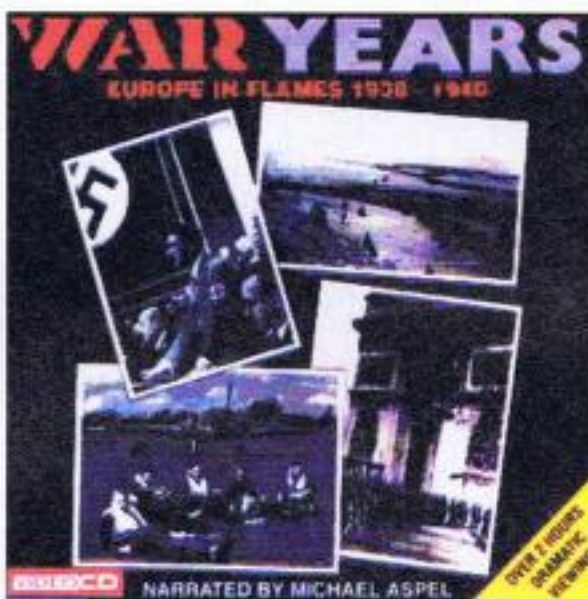
THE TWILIGHT ZONE
CD Vision

Never seen before on TV, the two stories on this CD are presented by storyteller Rod Serling. *When The Dead Are* is set in the aftermath of the American civil war and stars Patrick Bergin and Jack Palance. The story follows a brilliant young surgeon who discovers a strange head wound on a patient who recently died. It appears the person had lived longer than he should have done, for the wound was fatal but it appears that the person lives on. In his quest to find out why, the surgeon journeys to the Shadow Island where the secret of eternal life can be found. He soon also discovers that most of the island's inhabitants are well past their sell-by (death) date. A macabre setting with some really gory scenes are in store for anyone viewing this. The *Theatre* is the second story, in which a young lady visits a cinema to have a relaxing time but ends up seeing visions of herself in a re-enactment of her day which manifests itself in a nightmare experience!

THE REDEMPTION SERIES
CD Vision

These include French titles one of which is *Female Vampire* (aka *The Bare Breasted Countess*) which is one of the best-known films from the director Jess Franco. *FV*

CD Vision's multi-media releases cover a diverse range of topics from cartoons and comedy to documentaries and music, catering for all tastes and ages. If you've never seen any of the *Police Stop* series you really should. You'll be amazed at some of the insanely stupid things people do!



features Romay as the vampire Countess Irina Karstein who does some really wicked things to the menfolk in the film — too rude really to say. After she has fallen in love with one of her victims, she drowns herself in a bath of blood to rejoin her beloved in the realm of the dead! A French talkie with an over-dubbed 94 mins.

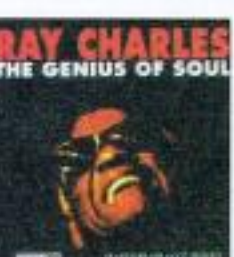
FASCINATION
CD Vision

Another French classic from 1979. The story centres on two women, chosen by a group, who have to find a man they can ritually slaughter and consume in a cannibalistic feast. Gory Stuff! Described by one cult book as one of the best pictures ever made!!

RAQUEL WELCH
CD Vision

Exercises, diets and a whole lot more. Want to lose some weight? Light aerobics to strengthen your cardiovascular system. Yoga for relaxation. Watch the Hollywood star go through her routines. You may not want to join in, but its nice to see someone pumping up (oo-er)! Narrated by Hattie Winston.

■ DDF



The Amiga scene now looks like it will have a new lease of life with the news that ESCOM, the German company, has taken the reins. While restructuring goes on, the only thing to say is that while the fickle software houses are now planning what to release, you have a wealth of Video CDs out there to play on your Amiga 32. FMV cards are hard to get but there are still some around if you are lucky enough to find one or want to pay £199.00. It's a lot of money but for a music CD player it's good value when you look at what's on offer.

There are now two major companies in the UK who are releasing film and music CDs that can be played on the CD32, PC with Reelmagic, CDi with a digital card and even Apple Mac with an Mpeg card. The really weird thing is that the CD32 presents the best quality of all machines. A short selection of titles follows...

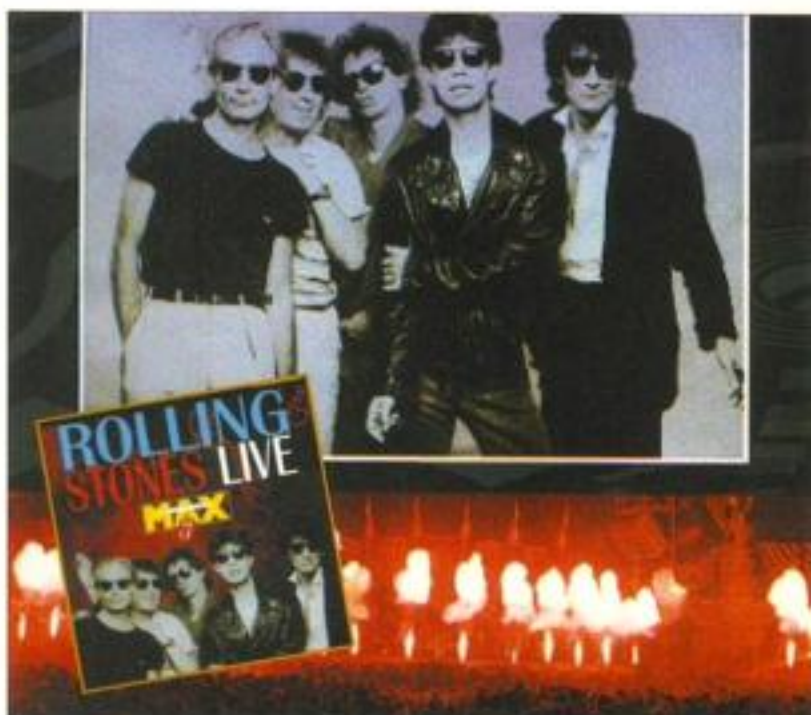
THE CLASH

The Rude Boys

Castle Communications



The Clash, along with the Sex Pistols, were notorious for their outrageous on-stage behaviour. The punk band has a cult following and the two CD package shows them in concert/on tour. 29 tracks of loud, frantic music, with some violent behaviour from the band and the crowds that attend the concert. Quality-wise the compression routines and streaming are excellent. For all those Clash fans, tracks include *Rude Boy*, *Punk and Disorderly*, *Police and Thieves*, *Sex Drugs and Rock 'n Roll*, *Tommy Gun*, *Johnny Too Bad* and a lot more anti-conformist titles. The small booklet that accompanies the 90 minute CD may only be 4 pages long, but a good history of the CD plus snippets about the band members give you a good insight into what it's all about. For some reason most Video CDs are devoid of information, and it would make things complete if a book accompanied them all! This is a niche CD and one that will probably only appeal to fans of the band. It's loud, crass and pretty uncontrollable!



PINK FLOYD

The Wall

Polygram

ROLLING STONES

Live at the Max

Castle Communications

The grand old men of rock still keep playing on. Although I must admit I'm not fan of the group, the collection of songs could not have been better chosen as a representation of their music. *Start Me Up*, *Tumbling Dice*, *Ruby Tuesday*, *Honky Tonk Woman*, *You Always Get What You Want*, *Paint It Black*, *Sympathy of the Devil*, *Brown Sugar*, *I Can't Get No Satisfaction*, *Its Only Rock and Roll* are all the classic tracks from the early days of their career. The Max part of the title is a hint for you to turn the volume up to maximum! The live footage was shot in Berlin and includes 112 minutes of excellent songs, clever cut shots of the group and lots of Mick Jagger's prancing.

With the band re-emerging with what I believe is one of their best albums and a series of concerts, this should make compulsive viewing for everyone. I was never a fan with the outrageous Syd Barrett and after their first (or was it second) album, *A Saucerful of Secrets*, they then went into what I called the transitional period, where all their music was full long segments of instrumentals which weren't very melodic or even pleasing to listen to. *The Wall*, with the chart topping single, brought the band to prominence with the masses and this album, now on CD with lots more is now a part of rock legend. *Another Brick in the Wall* is one everyone sings along to but this 1982 release is still innovative in ideas and approach. Okay, half of the CD in my view is pretty awful but the other half is



Amiga CD

Fun, Films and Music

brill. Great solos and stunning cinematography earns this special points, as even if you do not like the music you will like some of the film footage.

JIMI HENDRIX

Rainbow Bridge

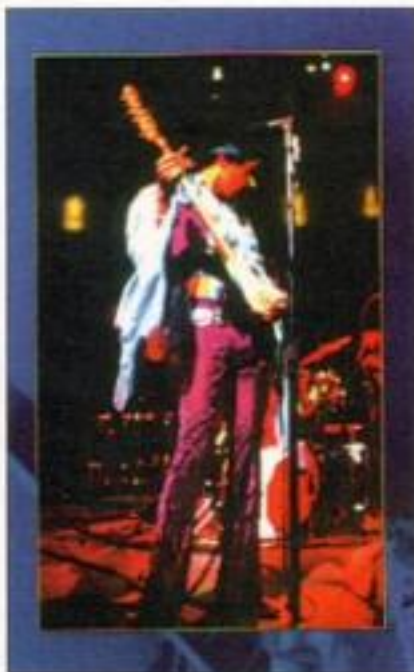
Castle Communications



'Ah, Jimi Hendrix - who is he!' will come the comment from the vast number of you younger people. Jimi Hendrix was the first really great electric guitarist around. If Eric Clapton is the great technical player, then Jimi was the most inventive, and I am sure Eric will merit him as being the person who did more for the rock industry than any individual player. Even now, nearly 20 plus years after his death, his playing is still inspirational. His approach was different in many ways. He was not classically trained, could not read music and even played with a right handed guitar although he was left

handed. If you watch some of the early footage with Jimi you will notice that the E base string is at the bottom and not at the top. Even the way he tuned his guitars was different. The man sounded like there were two guitars being played at once as he played chords and interjected fast solo runs over the top. *Rainbow Bridge* came when he was nearing the end of his career before he died, and there is a great debate as to whether this is some of his best stuff. All his works were great because his style changed from album to album. *Rainbow Bridge* is one of the most melodic and structured of all his LPs. On this CD we have *Dolly Dogger*, with some really amazing zippy guitar playing, short but crisp licks. *Room Full of Mirrors*, with excellent overdubbing. *Ezy Rider*, *Look Over Yonder*, plus more tracks. Even some earlier classics like *Hear My Train Coming/Voodoo Chile* and *Purple Haze* are put together in a montage. *Foxy Lady* shows Jimi thrusting his guitar around like it was a toy and boy can he play. The real let down about the collection is that it's really a theme documentary with more about the *Rainbow Bridge* event and the hippies behind it. Therefore, you have two-thirds of the CDs dedicated to a storyline and not Jimi Hendrix himself. When he does appear in the second disk, the tracks are too short and there isn't really enough music, but then I suppose it's better than nothing!

Watch this video and you will see the stars of today imitating him, but none come close. Prince eat your heart out! Great footage, some of which I have never seen before. Buy this and you'll be converted!



THE CRYING GAME

Philips

This has been around for a while now but it's still one of the best films I've seen on CD. This is one that tugs on the heart strings, whilst at the same time being mean and moody. Possibly one of those politically incorrect films in the current climate, but you should view it for yourself if you can, because despite the fact that it's based around the exploits of the IRA in London and Ireland, the actual scenario is one that will have you on the edge of your seat with some really extraordinary twists.

Jody is a British soldier held hostage by the IRA and awaiting death but a relationship develops between him and one of the captors who he asks to trace his girlfriend. They fall in love and some dramatic scenes then occur. Even if I mentioned just a little more it will give the game away.

This is an 18 certificate, and although there are some gory scenes it is not gratuitously violent. Running for 112 minutes you will be biting you nails right until the last minute of the film, and I mean the last minute.



LESLIE NIELSEN

Bad golf made easier

Polygram

The *Naked Gun* star who has made the art of acting bad look good, starts this hilarious tutorial with the words, 'You don't play golf to feel bad, but play bad golf to feel good.' It is hard to describe this as every few minutes some really wacky dialogue changes the flow of what he is originally saying. He pops up with outrageous golfing gear complete with 3 hats. The hard part is to watch what is going on in the background as opposed to the actor himself for either way you will miss something. So here you must watch the CD at least twice to take in the double dose of comedy. Golfers in the background are chucking clubs around whilst Leslie is spouting on about the merits of golf. This might sound a mixture of cut clips but there is a cohesive story behind the whole thing. Some



really funny takes from the making of this video are also included. There are some really classic one liners, and although this video has a PG certificate, how about these ones: 'Watch this video for it has more holes than a sex video!', 'Talking to your balls will help you golf.' 'The best way to improve your score is to lie!' Also watch out for a cast of celebrities who make token appearances. The video costs £12, and my one real criticism is that all you get is a mere 48 minutes!

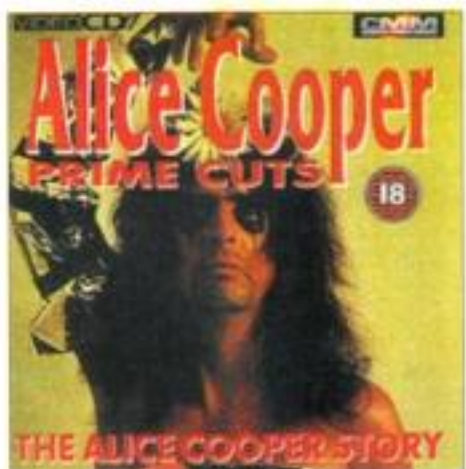
quite remarkable that they achieved so much in such a short space of time. Did you know that Ginger Baker's roots go right back to the late 50's when he was in a number of jazz bands, or that Jack Bruce came to prominence whilst in the Alexis Korner band as a vocalist, bass player and harmonica player? Now you may not care, but when you learn all about the background to each member and see what they have gone on to do then this becomes more of a history into the rock archives. Eric Clapton's past band read like a who's who. Starting with the Yardbirds, who went on to take the resident spot at the Marquee from the Stones, then on to the John Mayall band... From the moment you load this in, with Simon Bates injecting the narrative, then shots of the band members, in black and white photo form, colour shots in concert, you know this is something special. Music is prominent throughout with classics such as W. Dixons' Crossroads, and Spoonful. Live in concert on their tour in the States and the Albert Hall complication are not to be missed. The mere fact that some of the songs are nearly 30 years old is quite remarkable as the guitar riffs, songs and even production sounds like they could have been made today. Disraeli Gears, I'm So Glad, and Sun Shine of your Love are a mere few of the tracks included. I thought I knew everything about this group but I could not have been further from the truth.

This is compulsive viewing even if you are not familiar with the band. This is a piece of rock history and Eric Clapton has offered as much to the music industry as people like John Lennon, Paul McCartney, etc. Not to be missed. You can eMAIL me with any news or views at derek@euromags.servelan.co.uk.

ALICE COOPER

The Alice Cooper story - Prime Cuts

Castle Communications



Alice Cooper has now been on the music scene for a good twenty years, and, as he says on the CD, he was the bad guy who broke through the Love Generation and brought a raunchy feel to the scene. Billed as 'the ultimate look at Alice', this is quite an interesting offering. I say 'quite', apart for two years when Alice was the vogue group, releasing some excellent tracks that you can really only count on the finger of one hand, the classic sounds including Schools Out, Poison, Elected, No More Mr Nice Guy and the one track that stands out above the rest Only

Women Bleed, can truly be classed as rock classics. Not many for such an icon of the industry where his on-stage antics and look were his number one asset. Even now he still blacks his face and wears clothes that look dated. Having watched the video complete with some interesting comments by the man himself, plus Ozzie Osbourne, Slash from Guns and Roses and producer Bob Erzin, you are left with the feeling that this is really somewhat past its sell by date. Coming on two CDs, there are twenty-plus tracks live in concert, many which never been seen before. This is one of those curiosity CDs, and I must admit I was eager to load it up, but it offered nothing either audible or even visual that I have not seen or heard before!

KEEPING THE FAITH

An evening with Bon Jovi

Polygram



You either love 'em or loathe 'em but you must admit they do what they do better than most rock bands. This 2 disk compilation has all the best tracks from the group and they include : With A Little Help From Your Friends, Wanted Dead or Alive, Keep the Faith, Blaze of Glory, Living on a Prayer, Its My Life. In total there are over 16 tracks and this is a great live concert with nothing cut, so you get to see and hear there group talk to the audience and get the feel of actually being there. Now if you have already got most of the tracks then an added bonus of some acoustic versions of

their songs, plus lots of behind the scenes shots mark this down as a very worthy and up to date experience. Its fresh, alive, so turn the volume up and enjoy!

LIVE FRESH CREAM

(CD Version)

Castle Communications

If you are a fan of Eric Clapton you will no doubt know that he was a founder member of one of the greatest live rock bands of the sixties. Including Ginger Baker and Jack Bruce, this CD offers music, interviews and an insight into all 3 members. This is a true Rockumentary, giving all the information about the band from their beginnings in 1966 to the final concert at the Albert Hall in 1969. It is



BELINDA CARLISLE

Runaway Live

Castle Communications

Another 2 CD presentation of an artist live in concert. This is the classic live performance of Belinda on the Runaway tour of 1990, full of her hits and showing her sensational talent (well that's what the press blurb says).

I admit I kinda like Belinda, but must confess to never having heard one of her albums, although I have found most of her singles enjoyable. The same applies to this. Its nothing really special, just a very laid back affair with some great tracks, some good and some very mediocre. I get Weak, Heaven is a Place, Mad



About You are all top ten hit songs. Her effervescent style soon gets you bobbing along to the mood of the songs and although her distinctive voice makes a few of the songs sound samey, the cut shots and the video from the concert is top notch.

SADE

Life Promises
Sony

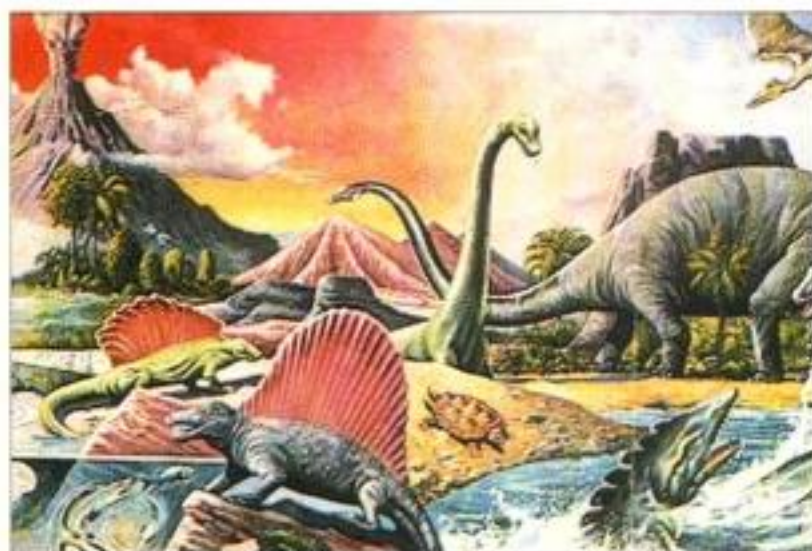
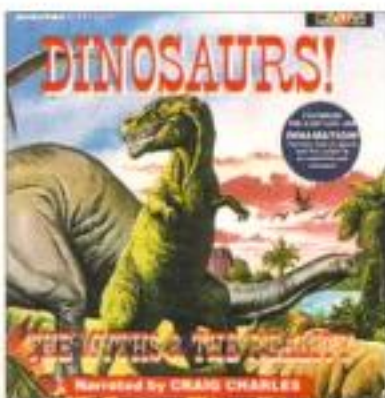


The smouldering voice of Sade complete with some of her top selling tracks which include: Smooth Operator and Your Love is King. The other 12 tracks are a compilation of slow melodic songs showing the singer has a brilliant vocal range. This may not be to everyone's taste but the shots of her singing are clean and each track offers a new back-drop and some interesting backing arrangements. Running time is approximately 60 minutes.

DINOSAURS

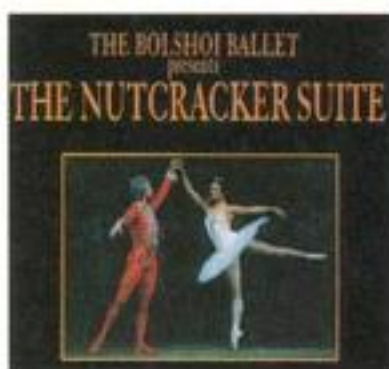
Castle Communications

This is narrated by Craig Charles of Red Dwarf fame. This was one of the first CD videos to work on all formats using the latest Diamation - which utilises the latest 3D computer graphics. The CD delves into the myths and reality behind these extinct creatures. Whereas most companies have used this subject matter on the back of Jurassic Park, Castle present one of the most interesting 60 minutes of facts you will ever be presented with. Chronologically it moves from when the Dinosaurs died out because man evolved. Dinosaurs were stupid and inefficient, all prehistoric animals were Dinosaurs, all Dinosaurs were solitary creatures - which are all myths. The narrative is stunning with so many facts enlightening the viewer and the visuals are as good as the ones in Jurassic Park. If I had to choose one CD to show you what edutainment is about, with the quality of CD production, then this would be the one I would choose.



THE BOLSHOI BALLET

The Nut Cracker

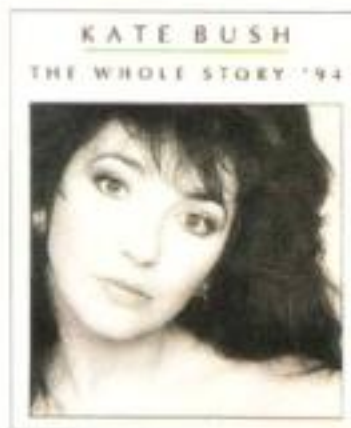


What you have here is the top ballet group in the world with the most famous story. Even if you hate ballet, or should I say not have any interest, you will certainly be humming along with the tunes. Tchiakovsky's Nutcracker Suite is based on the fairy tale by E.T.A. Hoffman and tells the story of a little girl's adventure into a magical world of toys on Christmas Eve with an enchanted Nutcracker Prince and the evil Mouse King. Digitally recorded, this is top quality presentation and comes on two CDs.

KATE BUSH

The Whole Story
EMI

Coming on two CDs, you have the very best of Kate (so we are informed) dancing and prancing around. Hit titles include The Man with the child in his eyes, Wuthering Heights, Bobooshka and Running up that Hill. I must confess, I thought that Kate has had many more hits than those which are featured on this CD, which includes a total of 18 tracks complete with a discography. Not as dynamic as I would have assumed, but pleasing nevertheless. I just get the feeling with this compilation that it has been put out to fill a hole in the market, and more research into the tracks laid down with more facts and even variations in setting would have made a far better impact!



EARTHA KITT

(CD Version)

Described on the cover as the most exciting woman in the world is somewhat pushing it, but can you believe that was a quote from Orson Wells! Renowned for her feline looks, movement and purring, it is hard to class her as a true Jazz singer. Her career dates back to the fifties where she toured the boards in the States in Broadway musicals. Tracks that I have never heard and some unusual vocals make this one to miss, and I do not say that about many CDs! ■ DDF



CD feature

Derek Dela Fuente and Paul Rigby look into the ever-growing world of CD movies. This month we have a whole host of titles playable (with the necessary add-ons) on your standard CD32 Amiga. Many Hollywood blockbusters and classics are coming out every week, so here's a roundup of the best...

NOTE : All the following conform to whitebook standard, which means they will work on your CD32 with an FMV card, but we are not responsible if they don't, so there!

First off, we'd like to give a great big thanks to everyone at Philips — THANKS!
Video CD is backward-compatible with CD-i, meaning all CD-i players equipped with the FMV digital video cartridge add-ons can play Video CDs, and full-motion CD-i discs play in Video CD players. In addition, Video CDs also play in Commodore's Amiga CD32, and possibly the 3DO Multiplayer. Advances can be incorporated into the format.

NAKED GUN 33¹/₃ - THE FINAL INSULT



Leslie Nielsen stars in this police spoof. Bungling supersleuth Leslie plays Lieutenant Frank Drebin, an undercover cop who gatecrashes the Oscar awards to prevent a terrorist plot. Also starring O.J. Simpson, George Kennedy and Priscilla Presley, this is over 80 minutes of comedy that will bring tears of laughter to your eyes.

Drebin crashes the ceremony to stop a terrorist plot that could mean curtains for him - or should that be window shades? It's so funny it's hard to know how this guy comes up with routine after routine of slapstick comedy.

RIK MAYALL - THE NEW STATESMAN

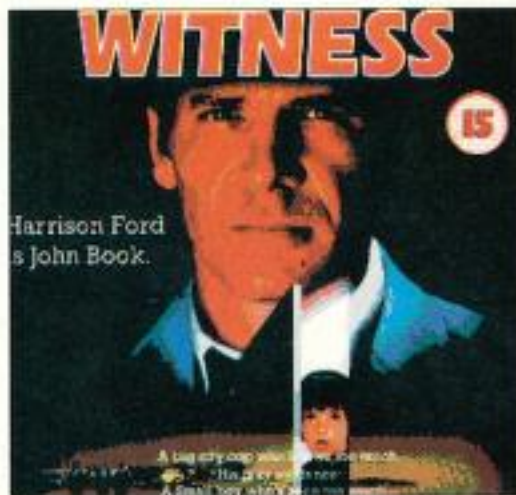


I must confess I am an avid Rik Mayall fan, and *The Young Ones* is my all-time favourite show. His style of alternative comedy is brilliant and very British, but *The New Statesman* is not really my cup of tea. I didn't find any of the programme funny, but looking at the viewing charts it's obviously very popular.

On this compilation are six episodes from the third series. Alan B'stard is sure to please most, but it's just not for me. Programmes included are *Labour of Love*, *The Party's Over*, *Let Them Sniff Cake*, etc.

WITNESS

Starring Harrison Ford with a big hat. Harrison plays Police Captain John Book, who is trying to extract a testimony from a young Amish boy, the only witness to the murder of a policeman by a fellow officer, a corrupt narcotics chief (Lethal Weapon's Danny Glover). Book disappears into the Amish Community with the boy and his mother (the gorgeous Kelly McGillis) in order to protect both them and himself. It's a society unchanged since the eighteenth century without telephones, electricity or cars and is completely isolated from the outside world. The film is a fascinating look into an alternative society, and the compelling storyline will keep you glued to the monitor as a story of drugs and corruption unfolds. With murder and love part of the ingredients, this top box-office draw makes gripping viewing!



Movie Mania

CROCODILE DUNDEE II



Aussie humour at its best. You may be wondering why so many old films are being released. The price of a Video CD is around £12.99, and is better than PAL format, being digital quality. Releasing so many timeless classics is also a great way of testing out the interest in the market.

Crocodile travels to New York for the second time, and still finds the hustle and bustle of the town riveting. While others may find it quite scary, he wanders around without a care in the world. Although the overall plot is not that strong, the comedy is AI and it's a pity there was never a third instalment in the series.

THE CRYING GAME



One the best CD films available — in fact, one of the all-time greats of the last twenty years. I must confess I was fooled a long time by the twisting storyline. It starts in Ireland, moving across the sea to the UK for the main chunk. Though it's about the IRA, forget about the politics of the film and become engrossed in the relationship between the two main characters. I wish I could

say what this strange relationship involves, but that would spoil the movie. The director is Neil Jordan (Cal, Company of Wolves, Mona Lisa, Interview With the Vampire), so quality is assured.

STAR TREK III - THE SEARCH FOR SPOCK

Let's face it, there was a 100% chance they'd find Spock (if only so he'd be in Star Trek IV), so this movie pays less attention to linear storytelling and more to his rediscovery, rebirth and the complexities of the Vulcan civilization. By the end, all Mr. Spock has to do is raise one of those famous eyebrows, and the audience cheers.



This is a good, but not great Star Trek movie, a sort of compromise between the first two. The first film depended on special effects. The second movie, the best in my opinion, remembered what made TV series special: not special effects or space opera gimmicks, but use of science fiction as a platform for programmes about human nature and the limitations of intelligence. Star Trek III looks for a balance between the previous two. It has some philosophising and some space opera, and there's an extended special effects sequence on the exploding planet Genesis that's the last word in fistfights-on-the-crumbling-edges-of-fiery-volcanoes.

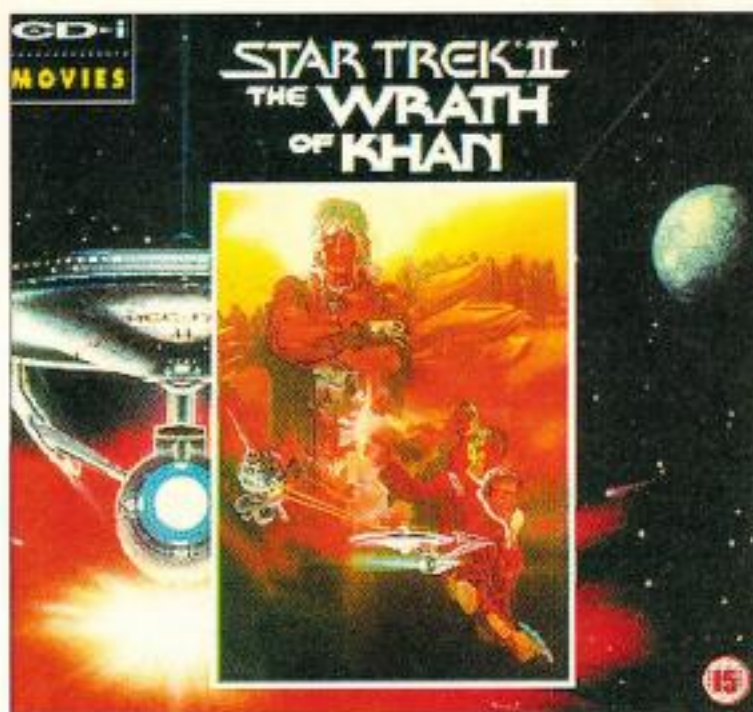
There is also a great-looking enemy spaceship that resembles a predatory bird in flight (although why ships in the vacuum of space require wings is still, of course, a question Star Trek prefers not to answer).

The best thing the Star Trek movies have going for them is our familiarity with the TV series. That makes for a sort of storytelling shorthand. At no point during this film, for example, is it ever explained that Vulcans are creatures of logic, not emotion though we have to know that in order to understand most of the ending. It's not necessary. These characters are under our skins. They resonate, and a thin role in a given story is reinforced by stronger roles in a dozen others. That's sort of reassuring, as (fanfare, please) the adventure continues...

STAR TREK II - THE WRATH OF KHAN

The peculiar thing about Spock is that, being half human, half Vulcan and possessing half the usual quota of human emotions, he consistently, if dispassionately, behaves as if he possesses very heroic human emotions indeed. He makes a choice in Star Trek II that would be made only by a hero, a fool or a Vulcan. Here the movie rises to one of its best scenes, because Star Trek stories work best when centred around their characters. Although I liked the special effects in the first movie, they were probably not the point; fans of the TV series wanted to see their favorite characters again, and Trek II understood that desire and acted on it.

Time has passed since the last episode. Kirk has retired to an administrative post. Spock is commanding the Enterprise, with a lot of new faces in the crew. The ship is on a mission concerning the Genesis device, a new invention capable of seeding a barren planet with luxuriant life. A sister ship, the USS Reliant, is scouting for lifeless planets and finds one that seems to be dead, but its instruments pick up a small speck of life. Crew members investigate, and find the planet



inhabited by an outlaw named Khan, exiled there years ago by Kirk, plotting revenge ever since.

Khan is played as a cauldron of resentment by Ricardo Montalban, and his performance is so strong that he helps illustrate a general principle involving not only Star Trek but Star Wars and other epic serials, especially the James Bond movies; each film is only as good as its villain. Since the heroes and gimmicks tend to repeat from film to film, only a great villain transforms a good try into a triumph. In a curious way, Khan captures our sympathy, even though he is obviously evil. Montalban doesn't over-act. He plays the character as a man of deeply wounded pride, whose bond of hatred with Admiral Kirk is stronger even than his traditional villain's desire to rule the universe.

There is a particularly inept battle in outer space that owes more to 'Captain Video' than state-of-the-art special effects. I always love it when they give us spaceships capable of leaping across the universe and arm them with puny weapons. A direct hit merely blows up a few control boards and knocks people off their feet. However, I don't much care if the battles aren't that amazing, because the story doesn't depend on them. It's about a sacrifice made by Spock, and it draws on the sentiment and audience identification developed over the years by the TV series.

Perhaps because of that bond and the sense that the Enterprise will carry on, the movie doesn't need an ending in a conventional sense. The film closes with the usual Star Trek narration, all about the ship's mission and its quest, and we are obviously being set up for a sequel. You could almost argue that the last few minutes of Trek II are a trailer for Trek III, but, no, that wouldn't be in the spirit of the Enterprise, would it?

A FISH CALLED WANDA

John Cleese may well be the funniest man alive. In this hilariously unhinged farce, Cleese has the role of a lifetime. Monty Python's most famous silly walker plays a stuffy English barrister, alert in court but dulled at home by a nag of a wife (Maria Aitken). Enter Wanda. Not the fish; that comes later. Wanda is Jamie Lee Curtis, deliciously sassy and seductive as an American con artist who comes to Cleese for help. She has just pulled off a diamond heist with three male accomplices: her lover Tom Georgeson, who masterminded the job, her lover Kevin Kline, an American

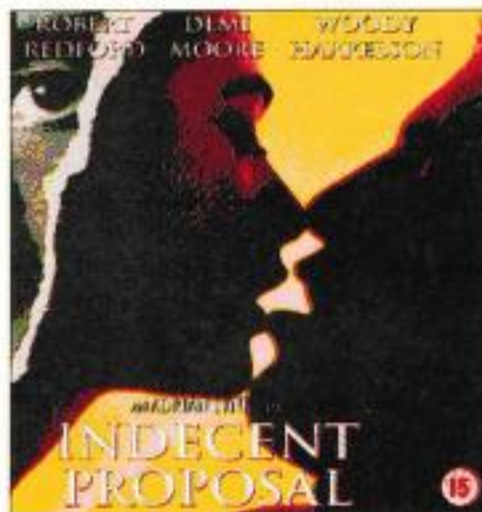


whose mind finds it hard to master anything, and her non-lover Michael Palin, a stutterer who loves the other Wanda, a goldfish. Curtis needs Cleese because Cleese is defending Georgeson, the only captured member of the quartet of thieves. Georgeson also knows where the diamonds are, because he hid them. Got that? It doesn't matter. The fun comes in watching screenwriter Cleese and veteran British director Charles (The Lavender Hill Mob) Crichton set this talented cast spinning through the slaphappiest slapstick in years. Gleeefully unstuck from his last role as the stiff South African journalist in Cry Freedom, Kline lets go with a robust round of physical comedy that compares with his best stage work (The Pirates of Penzance and the current Much Ado About Nothing). Palin, another Pythoner, is a deadpan delight trying to knock off an old lady (Patricia Hayes) who witnessed the crime; instead he keeps murdering her pet terriers. Still, it's Cleese who steals the show. Yes, he's fall-on-the-floor funny. Watch him strip down for a tryst with Curtis, only to be discovered dancing in naked abandon by a nonplussed British family. What really makes Cleese great is the no-bull way he plays the love story. Curtis may be hustling him, but the bumbling barrister's passion for her is real. He's unexpectedly, endearingly touching. Putting heart and heat into a film that could have easily slid by on silliness, Cleese proves himself a master actor.

INDECENT PROPOSAL

An amusing proposition, one that could get couples arguing late into the night, calculating the price of each other's devotion. If a rich stranger offered a million dollars to spend a night with a married woman, how would she and her husband respond? If the stranger were Robert Redford, many women would settle for a lot less — especially if the husband were Woody Harrelson. Indecent Proposal may have worked as a comedy, but British director Adrian Lyne (Fatal Attraction, the under-sung Jacob's Ladder) inflated the million-dollar question into a high-minded morality tale, offering all the obvious answers. Is adultery bad? (Yes!) Can money buy love? (No!) If you pimp for your wife, will she respect you in the morning? (Maybe, but you won't respect yourself.)

The premise is everything. David (Harrelson) and Diana (Demi Moore) appear to have the perfect relationship. She complains when he leaves his socks lying around, but their squabbles inevitably end in sex, portrayed in fast-paced peekaboo montages. While Diana sells real estate, David, an architect, builds their dream house on a choice strip of California seafloor (in real life, he would need a million dollars just for



the land). Then the recession hits, and their 'normal' life crumbles. With their house on the line, David and Diana go to Las Vegas to gamble their way out of debt. There, billionaire John (Redford) offers David a million for a night with his wife.

Lyne never shows how the deal is consummated — only its consequences. And, inexplicably, Diana falls for the billionaire as soon as he gives the slightest evidence that he is human. While Redford plays his under-scripted role with the emotional depth of a Naugahyde chair, Moore is eerily vapid — a vacant soul adrift on the whims of two golden boys. That leaves Harrelson to do all the acting. Just as his character earnestly struggles to win back his self-esteem — and his wife — the actor seems to be atoning for years of playing the blockhead bartender in Cheers. By the end, the movie is awash in sentimental homilies. Indecent Proposal may sound like fun, but couples intrigued by the premise are better advised to spend an evening discussing it over dinner than seeing it in the cinematic flesh.

SLIVER

The interest of a terrible movie such as *Sliver* lies in what it tells us about the vagaries of Hollywood. A poor picture, it is a prodigious paradigm. First, it's based on a novel by Ira Levin, of which little more than the title and basic idea are retained. If you're going to buy the work of a much-lauded writer like Levin (*Rosemary's Baby*), it makes sense to stick close to the text.

Second, the film marks the re-emergence of Robert Evans, the once-successful producer who, for years, has been a forgotten man. You'd assume that Evans, still no bleary-eyed dotard, would think twice before mulling his second, possibly last, chance. Instead, he settles for a screenplay by Joe Eszterhas, who's had both ups and spectacular downs, but commands a huge fee because his last, *Basic Instinct*, was a huge commercial hit. But that was directed by the expert Paul Verhoeven and was, compared to this lunatic fantasy about megavoyeurism, as restrained as Hitchcock's *Rear Window*.



What could have been in Eszterhas' mind? Let's recycle Sharon Stone, who was so sexy in *Basic Instinct*. Yes, but there she had only to play a spoiled rich nymphomaniac with murder as a possible sideline. Here we have to swallow her as a responsible editor at a serious publishing house, who keeps her nose clean even though she commands an unlikely enough salary to rent a spectacular apartment in a luxury high-rise. Miss Stone, who, even dressed

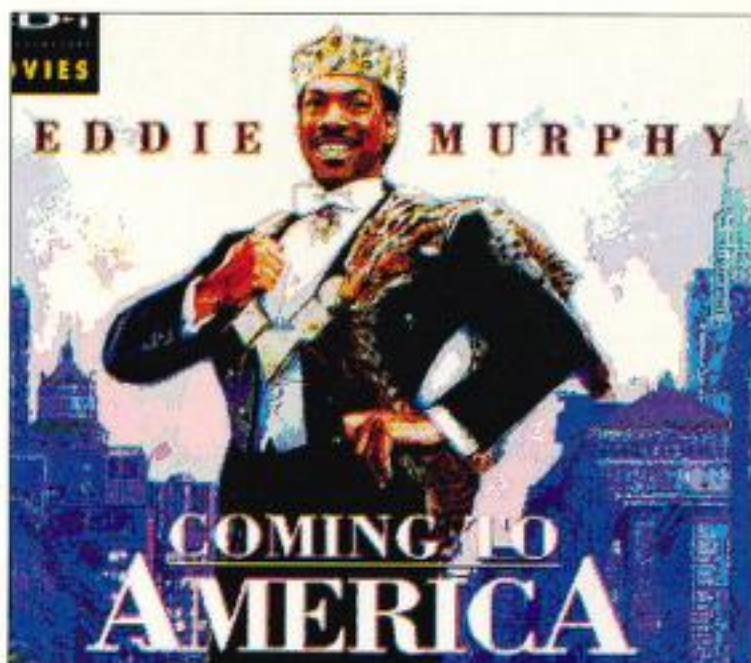
down and acting demure, could edit nothing more than a girly magazine, is a working stiff. She gets the very apartment from another stunning blonde, her (in more ways than one) dead ringer, who hurtled twenty floors to her mysterious death.

The building abounds in strange tenants who come to sticky ends. Several of them seem to be remnants of Levin's novel, ineptly tossed into a different plot or pot, where they make as much sense as old wine in new bottles. The feeble suspense boils down to which of the two men courting Carly (Stone), killed her predecessor and may do her in. There's Jack, the burnt-out crime novelist, who, though played by the manly Tom Berenger, behaves like a nastily unruly child. And there is Zeke, the unacknowledged owner of the building, who's secretly wired every last room of it to his closed-circuit TV console (a six-million-dollar gadget he picked up in Osaka). Played by William Baldwin, he sits there endlessly watching the mostly sexual games which proliferate in the building.

What gives the film — intended as soft-core pornography, but from which some filty cuts have excised the dubious thrills — its curiosity value is the way the director, Philip Noyce, a fellow from *Down Under* (though never before so far down), contrives to make up for the lost explicit sex. He has the cast, and particularly Miss Stone, wander about with glazed, befogged eyes, and talk in husky, throat-bound voices, as if multiple orgasm were imminent, even though they may merely be evaluating a literary manuscript or jauntily jogging in Central Park.

It makes scant difference which of Carly's swains is the perpetrator, since both are unappetising enough. Each, at different times, is made to seem a pillar of society — not to be confused, however, with the pillar against which one of the more daringly sexual scenes is enacted. The other big scene is a variation on one in *Basic Instinct*, where Miss Stone vamped a group of policemen questioning her by sitting in such a way as to make it obvious to them and the movie audience that she was wearing no panties. Here Baldwin, who looks like a somnolent fruitbat, takes her to a posh restaurant 'for some truffles,' and makes her remove both bra and panties during dinner. The spectacle could remove the dinner from the strongest stomachs in a decent establishment. But nowhere is there a sign of a single truffle; all the hounds and pigs must have been busy making movies.

COMING TO AMERICA



Few would dispute that there is no TV breeding ground for movie stars more fertile than *Saturday Night Live*. Since the show debuted on October 11th, 1975, Hollywood has been raiding the Not Ready for Prime Time Players. Chevy Chase defected after the first season. Dan Aykroyd, John Belushi, Gilda Radner, Jane Curtin and Bill Murray soon followed. Then Hollywood hit on their flashiest replacements: Eddie Murphy, Billy Crystal, Jim Belushi, Martin Short, Dana Carvey.

Most SNL vets find gold in them Hollywood hills. Aykroyd and Murray's *Ghostbusters* and Murphy's *Beverly Hills Cop* pictures are among the top twenty all-time grossers. But have you noticed anything missing? Like originality, spontaneity, edge, relevance, pointed irreverence, wit? Late-night, low-budget TV inspires risk; big-budget movies do not. Play it safe or kill the golden goose.

Disturbing Fact No. 1: SNL's comedy outlaws have been selling us pap on the big screen. Disturbing Fact No. 2: We're buying it. Has Hollywood defanged SNL humor for good? Toothless new movies from Chase and Aykroyd would make it seem so, but Murphy often pleased us with a cry of foul-mouthed rebellion. *Coming to America*, one of Murphy's most successful films to date, is part farce, part old-fashioned romance. Hardly ground breaking, but Murphy's performance is. Playing an African prince who comes to America to find a bride who will love him for himself, he acts with a beguiling simplicity that lifts the movie into the top ranks of entertainment. Swaggering, swearing and scene-hogging are out this time. Murphy shares the jokes with real-life pal Arsenio Hall, stand-up comic and former host of Fox's *The Late Show*.

As the prince's bodyguard/companion, the amiable Hall is appalled at leaving the palace's luxuries to live like a peasant in America while the prince goes bride hunting. The early palace scenes, though brief, still rankle; director John (Twilight Zone — *The Movie*, *Blues Brothers*, *American Werewolf*) Landis pumps up the sexist, scatological gags in the script by ex-SNL writers David Sheffield and Barry W. Blaustein — like having bare-breasted beauties wash the royal privates. The prince craves a more independent woman. So the king, James Earl Jones, gives his son 40 days in America. Where better, the prince thinks, to find a queen than Queens?

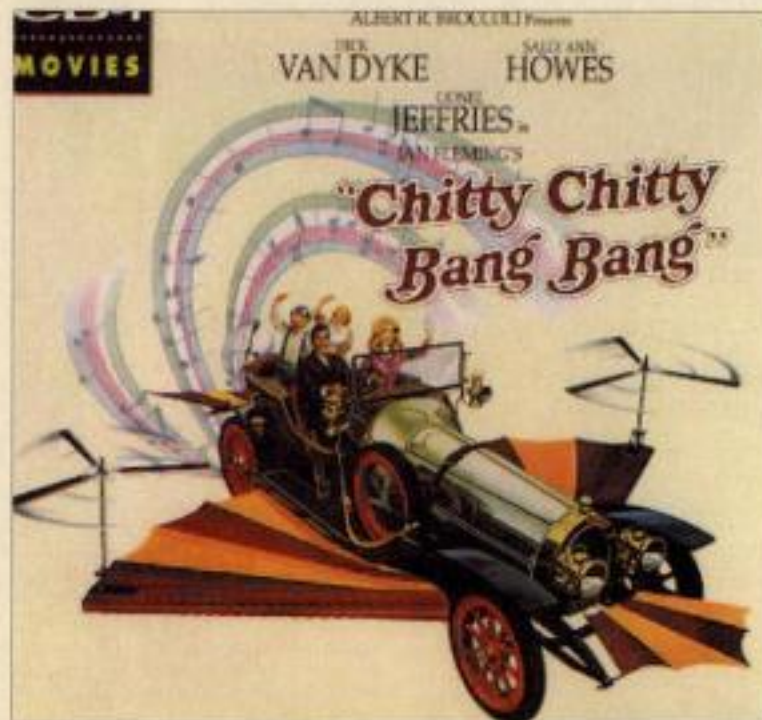
Expect no surprises in the outcome, but delight instead in Murphy's easy banter with Hall. And keep an eye out for the two in various cameo roles, cleverly disguised by makeup whiz Rick Baker, double-Oscar winner. Baker surpasses himself transforming Murphy into a barber, an elderly Jewish kvetch and the bloated lead singer of a group called *Sexual Chocolate*. These are vivid comic creations, but Murphy really shines in his quieter moments. His walk home after his first date, singing Jackie Wilson's *To Be Loved* in an African accent, is joyously romantic. This is Murphy's most heartfelt and hilarious performance, and his riskiest. *Coming to America* shows Eddie Murphy's talent has barely been tapped. ■

CD feature

It's time to open the doors once more at the ACG Odeon for a look at the latest video CD releases reviewed by that most incongruous of movie-goers Derek dela Fuente. He's got a right old mixed bag with light-hearted comedy (*Four Weddings*) and sick reality (*Executions*) so get stuck in!

CHITTY CHITTY BANG BANG

Philips



OK, Snigger, Snigger, what a film to review! This comes on 3 discs and runs for a wapping 2 hours and 2 mins. Chimm-Chimminee Chimminee Chim Chimm Chim.... Supercalfradulistic expalidosuis, wow, the songs go on and on. Just a Spoon full of sugar makes the medicine go down. I remember seeing this film at Plumstead Cinema nearly 25 years ago (before I was even born — young Ed) and that makes me a really old man. Oops! I think I have the wrong film. This isn't *Mary Poppins* but I had you fooled!

The film stars Dick Van Dyke and Sally Ann Howes and even Benny Hill as the village toymaker. An enchanting film in the world of pirates, castles and a very famous car. It's one for the kiddies though nearly everyone over 35 has seen it but I bet the majority of you readers haven't!

FOUR WEDDINGS AND A FUNERAL

Polygram

Coming on 2 disks I've been waiting to see this for a long while. With all the furore about Hugh Grant at the moment what better time to review it. Now I



must confess to enjoying this film but I can't honestly understand why it won so many awards. It's good but not exceptional. The storyline revolves around weddings and, you guessed it, a funeral. Some of the really funny excerpts revolve around Rowan Atkinson, who plays the part of a vicar, who forgets the names of the two people he is marrying. There isn't really a deep story here but lots of everyday comedy sketches. The star of the film, apart from Hugh, is Andie Macdowell who he meets at the first wedding. Try as he may, Hugh is a bit of a ladies man (he really plays the part the tabloids are trying to exploit) and after loads of affairs with various ladies all of which are at the weddings, he cannot get Andie off his mind. This luscious American lady is about to marry and it really is a question - will the last wedding be Hugh's?

The CD quality is excellent and at a mere 12.99 offers great value for money.



AIRPLANE

Philips



The plane is going to Chicago. The pilot is going to New York. The passengers are going to pieces. Who out there hasn't seen an Airplane film? This is one of the few films you can watch over and over again and still laugh as there's so much going on each time you watch it you see something amusing you hadn't noticed before.

It's a masterpiece of off the wall comedy. It features Robert Hays as the ex-fighter pilot forced to take over the controls of an airliner when the flight crew succumbs to food poisoning. Leslie Nielsen and Kareem Abdul Jabbar are just two of the stars with some short cameo appearances by some top Hollywood actors. This hilarious spoof come high jinx drama will have you on the edge of your seat in tears of laughter. This is comedy at its very best and everyone should have a dose of Mr Nielsen daily.

2 discs 84 mins.

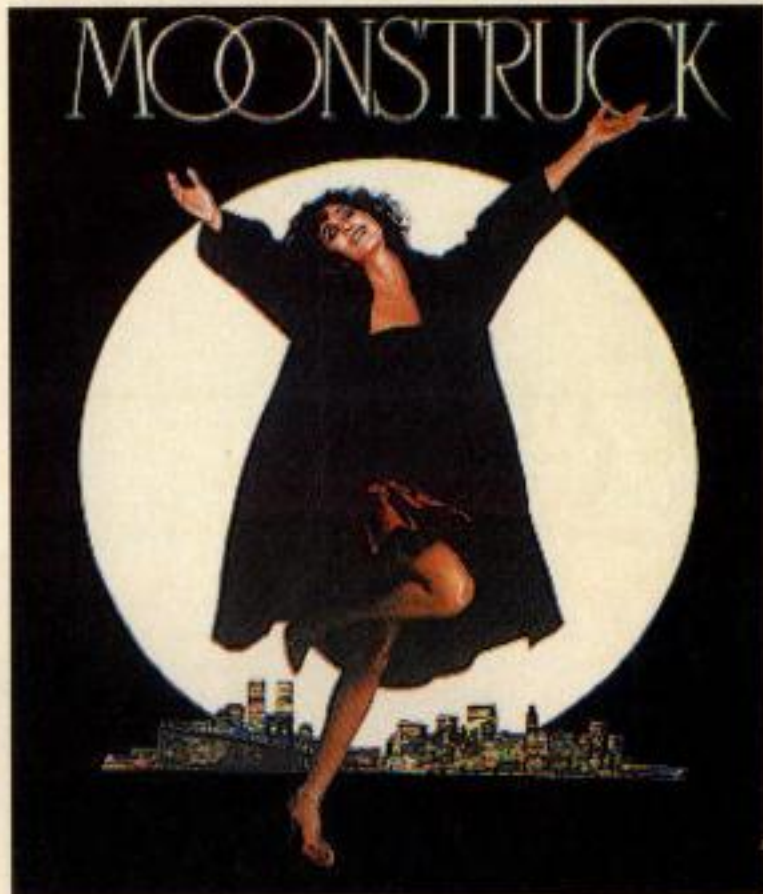


- Disc 1 (1) Opening Credits
 (2) Heart Trouble
 (7) Speeches
 (8) All Aboard
 (9) Sugar, Oxen
 (10) "Staying Alive"
 (11) Waves of Memory
 (12) Goodnight
 (13) Psych Ward
 (14) "Wade at Jordan"
 (15) Peace Corps
 (16) Airline Food
 (17) Automatic Pistol
 (18) Don't Panic
 (19) Snafu
 (20) Mayday

- Disc 2 (21) Historical
 (22) Lead and Cleat
 (23) Jive
 (24) Pushing Out of Time
 (25) Process
 (26) Coming In
 (27) The Tower
 (28) Touch Down
 (29) Have a Nice Day
 (30) End Credits

MOONSTRUCK

Philips



Starring Cher and Nicolas Cage this is a comedy/love story where Cher as Loretta, a dowdy widow, in trying to reconcile her fiancée with his brother falls for the brother in a whirlwind romance. Directed by Norman Jewison it combines the tough feel of the New York streets with the romantic feel of an Italian opera. The winner of 3 academy awards — one moment you'll be laughing and another you'll cry (well what can I say). This shows Cher to be more than a singer with a great voice!



THE UNTOUCHABLES

Philips



One of the best TV series about the prohibition and gangsters of the 20s and 30s was the Untouchables starring Robert Stack. This film about the series is also excellent, conveying the mood of the Chicago days when Al Capone ruled with absolute power. That is until Elliot Ness, the guy from the FBI, and a small force of men swore to bring him down. Prohibition in 1931 is the starting point of the film and the Feds cannot be bribed. The

THE UNTOUCHABLES

15

AL CAPONE, he ruled Chicago with absolute power. No one could stop him.

Until Eliot Ness and a small force of men swore they'd bring him down.



gangbusters make an impressive list of stars. Sean Connery, Robert De Niro and Kevin Costner make this a film to stick in your old grey matter for years.

Robert De Niro puts his customary full weight into his part and he makes a very convincing Al Capone — his mere presence is very daunting.

A thrilling tale telling the classic American story of good versus evil, handled with superb visual style and pace! 2 discs 114 mins

over again. Ursula Andress and Jack Lord (from Hawaii Five-0) are just two of the stars appearing in this classic.

FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE

HARRY SALTZMAN and ALBERT R. BROCCOLI present
SEAN CONNERY as JAMES BOND 007™
in IAN FLEMING'S
FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE



PHILIPS

VIDEO CD

THE JAMES BOND COLLECTION

Philips



For the first time ever all these titles are now on Video CD. Just to let you know they all work with an Amiga FMV card, RealMagic (thanks to Barrington Harvey) and any equipment with a digital card.

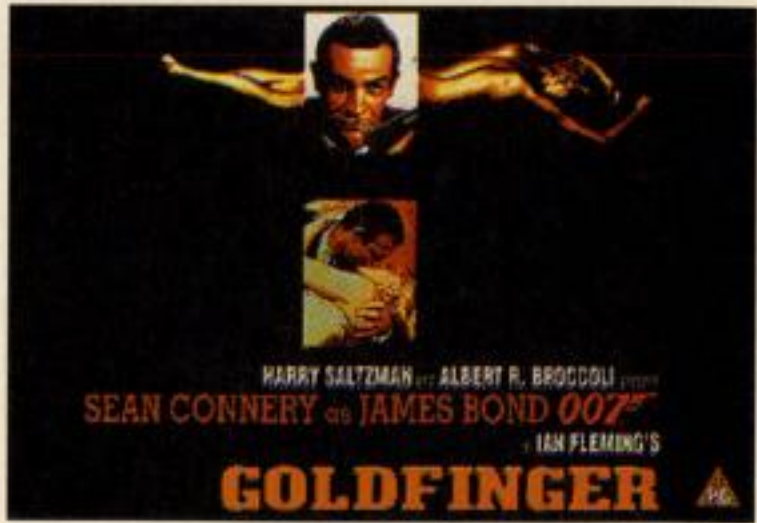
All told there are 3 films in the compilation, all starring the best James Bond of the lot — Sean Connery.

GOLDFINGER

007 takes on the man with the Midas Touch, billionaire Auric Goldfinger, in this explosive and extremely witty thriller. The monomaniacal Goldfinger plans to throw the western economy into a tailspin by contaminating all the gold in Fort Knox with nuclear radiation. Only one man can stop him... Guess who? This is the best of the 3 films! All come on 2 Cds.

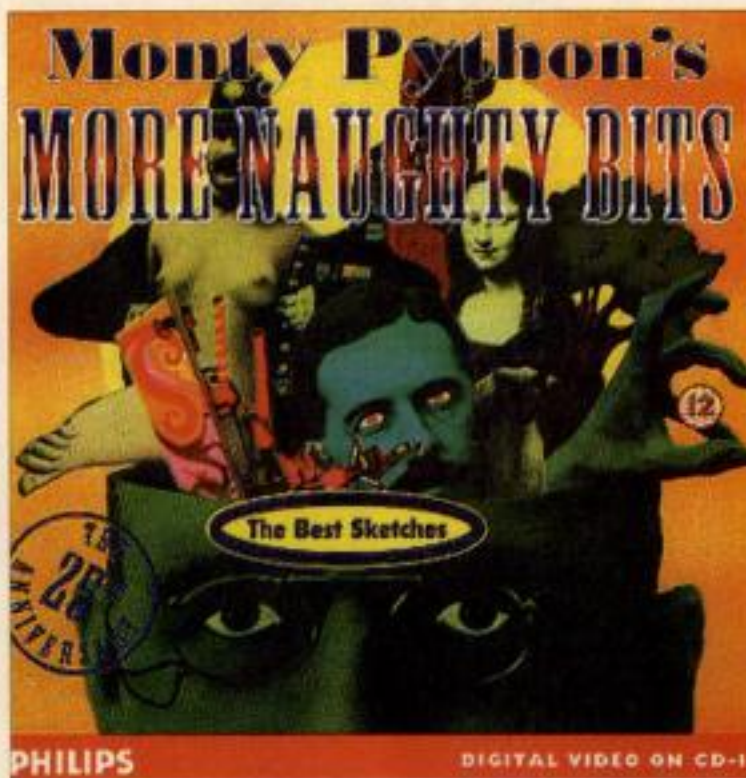
DR. NO

Dr No is sent to Jamaica to investigate a double murder. Bond is soon on the trail of Dr No, a fanatical mad scientist plotting to take over the world. Now if that all sounds very familiar it was these Bond films that drummed into us this same theme over and



MONTY PYTHON MORE NAUGHTY BITS

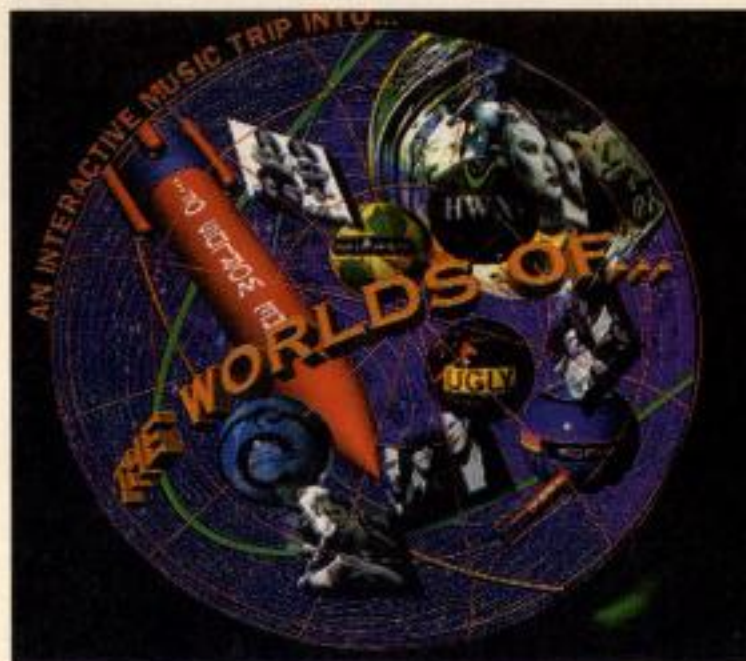
Philips



Here follows something completely different, no review just the sketches on this BRILLIANT CD. Black Knight, Trojan Rabbit from the Holy Grail, What have the Romans ever done for us, Brian and Fat Man from The Life of Brian, Nudge Nudge, Dirty Fork, Silly Job Interview, Dead Parrot, Kiliman Jaro, Merchant Banker, Spanish Inquisition, Dirty Hungarian Phrase Book, Argument Clinic, Ministry of Silly Walks — all from the TV series. Need I say more!

WORLD OF MUSIC

Philips



An interactive music trip. I must confess I like Vinnie Moore, Joe Satrianni, Boston and all the great names of rock but who the heck half these are I don't know and I bet they'll not be around in a few months time. If you like Sultans of Ping, Ugly, CNN, HWXI then this is right up your street. Just looking at the publisher Rhythm King who have done work with the BitMaps may enlighten you more. And good old Betty Boo was (or perhaps still is, I don't know) on their label. Where is she now? The music is combined with out of your mind acid pictures, smiley faces and montages of pics. This is weird, too weird even for me, but I'm sure the ravers among you will like it.

EXECUTIONS

CD Vision

Already this macabre video, which has now been encrypted onto Video CD, has caused a lot of controversy with most of the major tabloid papers — calling it the ultimate video nasty. The mere fact that they've called for a ban ensures it'll sell to an even broader audience interested to see what all the fuss is about.

Quite honestly I can't see the appeal of such a voyeuristic look at some of the most horrific scenes of killing ever seen on video. A good percentage of it is in black and white and chronicles the various ways there is to execute a human person from hanging to the electric chair. It even gives an insight into the whys and wherefores in the reasoning behind the various methods. Footage of people dying in gas chambers or being shot in the head is certainly X-rated stuff although I am an advocate of a free licence in allowing anyone to be allowed to see what they wish, this is possibly stretching it a bit. Especially when the only dignity left in death is solitude, not having millions of people watching.

The only parts I found of interest were some of the trivia facts in that more people have died in these various horrific ways than in the 1st World War — over 20,000,000 have ben executed in some manner since the 18th century.

A good deal of the footage has been taken from the vaults of the war years.

The image of death is not a visually interesting one and although the video does claim to be an objective look at the cultural, social and historical context of the death penalty I find it hard to believe this was really the idea behind it.

This is sensational stuff but all in the wrong context. I'm not going to say don't buy this as it's really horses for courses and the mere fact it's been reviewed gives it even more coverage. It's there, it's X Rated and costs £12.99. You pays the price and you get exactly what you would expect, the grim reaper in real life. (55 mins running time, sound and narrative woolly sounding!)

WOMEN OF COUNTRY VOLUM TWO

CD Vision

Personally I'm no country and western fan but there must be a large market out there especially as it now has it's own UK Satellite station. However, if you class Jimmy Nail as country and western then I guess I should say I like some bands and vocalists of the genre.

This is one of three CDs from CD Vision and firstly let me say that the picture quality is superb, made even better with the crystal clear CD sound.

The CD runs for 49 mins and, so I'm informed, the female artists included are the best in their field. Filmed on location in Murfreesboro, Tennessee you not only get some singalong tracks but interviews as well! Katy Mattea, Tammy Wynette (the only one I've heard of), Michello Wright, Patty Loveless and Wynonna all have a track to themselves with the last track on the CD pitting all the gals together.

Great if you like a bit of yee-ha! ■ DDF

CD feature

Another month, another visit to the celluloid world of Derek 'Director's Cut' Dela Fuente. This issue he goes on a safari to Africa, braves the arctic plains and takes a look around a few haunted houses for good measure. And for the women, how about a spot of Richard Gere?

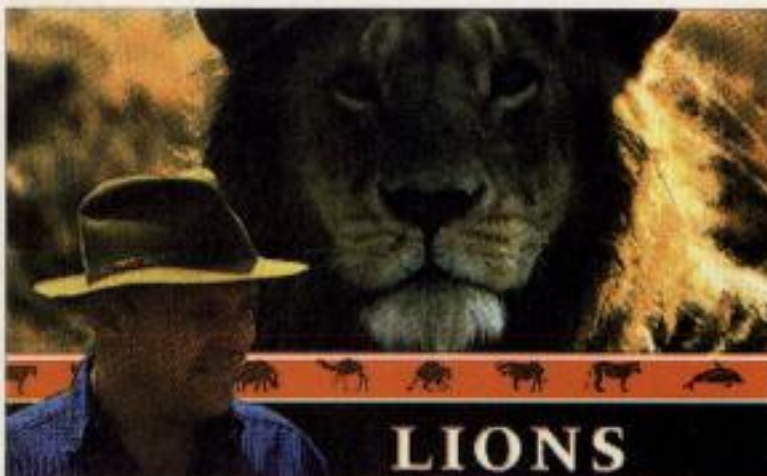
IN THE WILD : WOLVES

Timothy Dalton stars in this latest CD Video in the journey of a life time. He travels to the arctic on the trail of the much maligned, rare and elusive Arctic Wolf. He explore the wolves of the Brooks Range in Alaska's wilderness with the Nunamut Eskimos and comes uncomfortably close to huge Alaskan bears.

Finally his quest takes him to within five hundred miles of the North Pole where, on the open tundra, he comes face to face with a wolf pack. Ultimately Dalton is accepted by the wolves in the very remarkable closing scenes of the film. Lasting 60 minutes and costing £14.99 this is well worth a family viewing.

IN THE WILD : LIONS

Anthony Hopkins' fascination for the king beast inspired him to journey to East Africa to come face to face with this majestic predator. Hopkins' safari leads him to the Serengeti plains. In this ancient landscape he encounters the Masai — a tribe who have an extraordinary insight into the lions that live in their land. It's in the Ngorongoro Crater that Hopkins finds the largest lions in the world. He sees the prides hunting in a deadly alliance against buffalo and finds that it is the lionesses who rule lion society. 60 MINS. £14.99



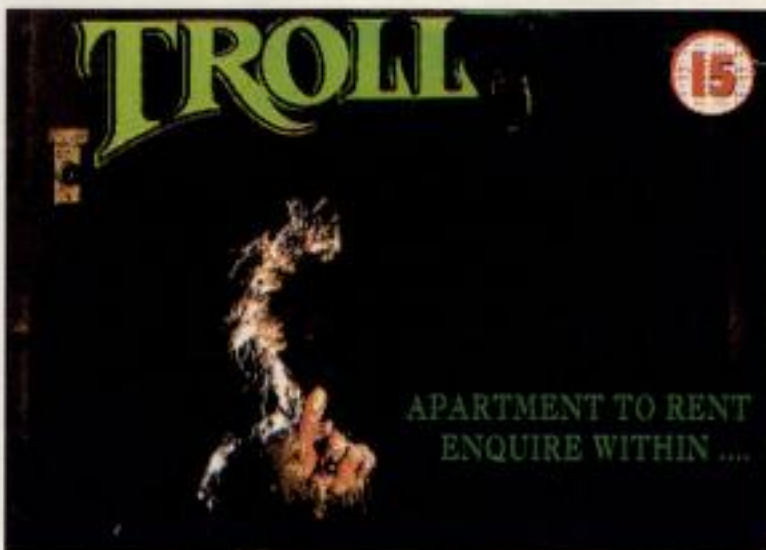
GHOULIES

On Jonathan's 18th birthday, he inherits a rambling old house. Through his explorations he begins unlocking the secrets and latent powers contained within his new found home. But there are other dark powers at work in the house. Powers more terrifying, more hideous than anything you have ever seen. It is foretold that evil will triumph and Ghoulies will walk the earth. 95mins. £14.99 CD VISION

TROLL

Long ago when the earth was being co-inhabited by humans and fantastic beings, trolls lived under bridges, in caves and shadowy forests. Now in the dimly lit corners of a dingy but otherwise ordinary 20th century laundry room, Torak, an evil troll, lies in wait for a chance to bring about cataclysmic changes that would forever erase mankind. By abducting a young girl and assuming her identity, he will take her place among her family, with plans to transform their apartment building into a fairy kingdom — one that he will rule.

Torak cannot possibly know that his greatest foes will be an ancient sorceress and a young boy. 90 mins. £14.99



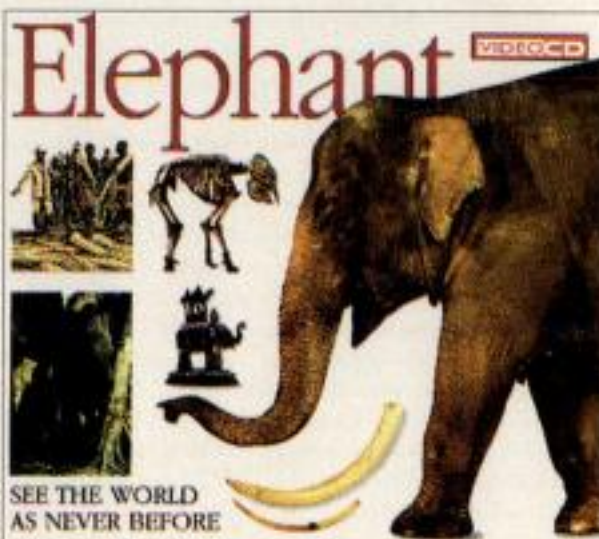
EYEWITNESS : ELEPHANT

Eyewitness presents the ultimate Natural History experience. The series takes the viewer on a dazzling wildlife tour, interweaving fact, history, anecdote, myth and legend with energy and humour.

Fast paced and full of stunning graphics, Eyewitness is an enriching experience for all ages. How do we know elephants have such long memories? What can they do with their incredible trunks?

Elephant reveals all the legends and stories about the greatest mammal ever to walk the Earth.

We follow its incredible history and unique relationship with man. Through war and pageantry, agriculture and travel, we have made the elephant one of the most cherished yet endangered animals. 35 mins. £9.99



Films, Movies and Videos

EYEWITNESS : AMPHIBIAN

Why was it thought that salamanders were born in fire? What use were toads in witches spells? Amphibian offers a unique view of the double lives of these remarkable frogs, toads and salamanders, their natural history habitats and fascinating life cycles. 35 mins. £9.99

EYEWITNESS : JUNGLE

Why do rain forests harbour the greatest concentration of life in the world? What is their role in the 'Tree of Life'? Jungle sheds light on a mysterious world once thought to shelter our darkest fears. We explore our changing perception of this invaluable resource, and its significance as a refuge for the richest variety of plant and animal life, vital in maintaining our planets ecological balance. 35 mins. £9.99

INTERSECTION (15)

Vincent Eastman (Richard Gere), a highly successful architect is a man caught between two love fires — his gorgeous, talented wife, Sally (Sharon Stone) or his sumptuous, effervescent lover, Olivia (Lolita Davidovitch). Many would say a very happy dilemma.



Things turn decidedly sour when he realises that, not only is his future love-life in the balance, but also his relationship with his thirteen year old daughter, Meaghan (Jenny Morrison), to whom he has become increasingly close. Somehow, he knows he must decide... but at the very moment of Vincent's decision, fate is about to step in and deal the sort of unexpected blow which can leave deeply ironic and devastating consequences for us all...

Richard Gere shows off his thespian talents to astounding effect in this remake of Claude Sautet's original 1969 production *Les Choses de la Vie*. Not for those of a more week willed disposition. £19.99

THUMBELINA (U)

Celebrated animator Don Bluth conjures up the magical world of Thumbelina, Hans Christian Andersen's classic tale set to the music of Award-winning composer Barry Manilow.

One night, the fairy prince is drawn to the sound of an enchanting voice and finds the beautiful Thumbelina who is no bigger than himself. But before their romance can blossom Thumbelina is kidnapped by Delores Toad, waylaid by Berkeley Beetle and betrothed to a befuddled Mr Mole. A passing swallow, Jacquimo, hears Thumbelina's cries for help and urges her not to fear her plight but to follow her heart. Sure enough her Prince Cornelius battles storms and wind to rescue his one true love.

Enjoy this spell-binding animation of Thumbelina — an essential addition to any collection of classic fairy tales. £17.99



THE SECRET OF NIMH (U)

This debut feature from Don Bluth Productions is already considered to be something of an animated classic in the tradition of Bambi and Snow White.

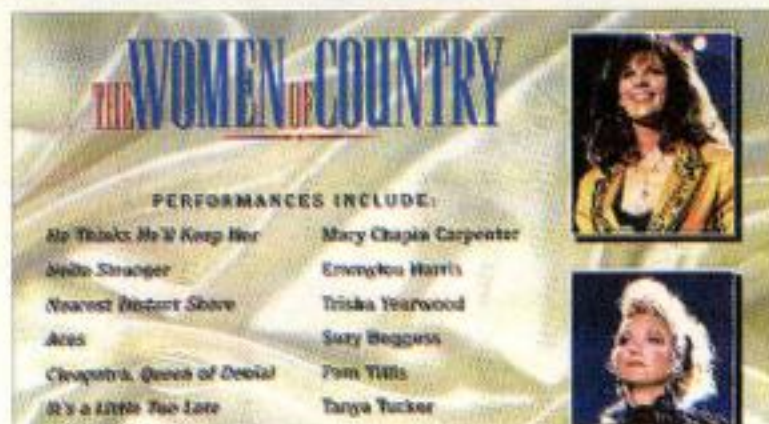
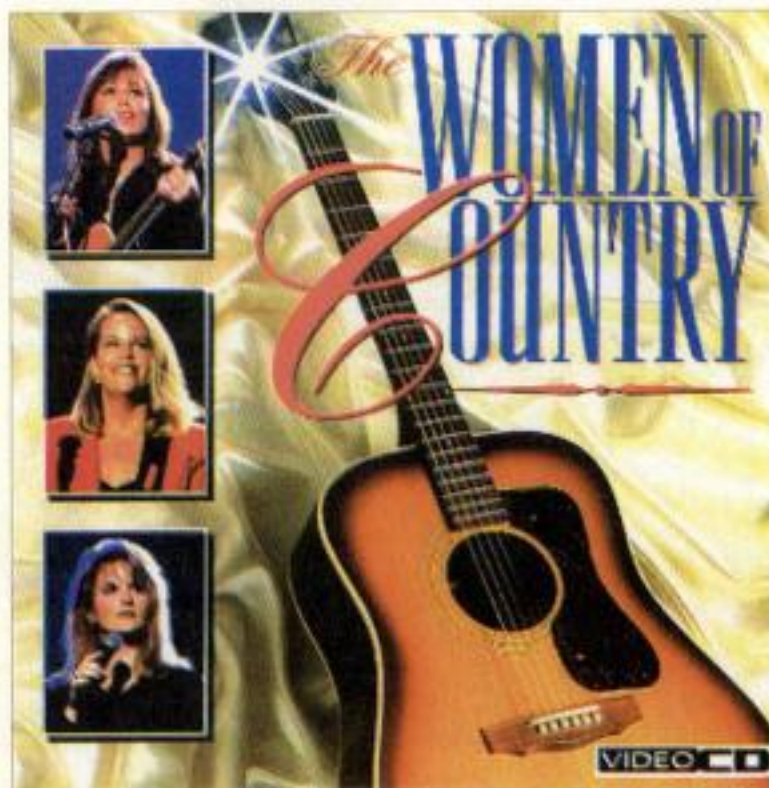
It tells the enchanting tale of a widowed field mouse — Mrs Brisby (Elizabeth Hartman), threatened with eviction from her cosy field. To overcome these seemingly insurmountable problems (for a field mouse), she enlists the help of Nicodemus, king of the rat pack. With the additional help of love-sick Jeremy the crow (Dom Deluise) and the ever mysterious rats of Nimh, she summons the strength to battle against the many obstacles which threaten her family's very existence. Filled with action, suspense and humour, *The Secret Of Nimh* is an adventure you'll long remember. £14.99

FMV feature

All you lucky owners of FMV cards can look forward to Christmas this year. With titles like *When Harry Met Sally*, *The Black Stallion*, *Malice* and some more *Star Trek* films, this is definitely a good year for FMV freaks (The real big one due next month is *Forrest Gump*, but more on that in the next issue!). We take a look at few FMV releases that you can play on your CD32.

WOMEN OF COUNTRY - CD VISION

This is for a niche market and two more CDs have just been released in this range. The quality of the sound and video is more or less perfect, but the artists featured are relatively unknown in the UK. That doesn't stop them from being very good indeed, though. Emmylou Harris, Tanya Tucker, Patsy Cline are all featured along with Pam Tillis, Lorine Morgan 40 or so more. These are the top female artists in the US and the video is mostly some great concert footage plus interviews and background info on them all. This is a fascinating insight into country music and a must for country fans everywhere.



STAR TREK - THE MOTION PICTURE - PHILIPS

Doesn't it seem that there is at least one *Star Trek* film released each month? This one comes on two CDs with a running time of over 2 hours. Nominated for an Oscar for special effects, this is one of the best *Trekie* films of the lot.



The motion picture is an epic adventure which has been taken from the TV series. An unidentified alien destroys three powerful Klingon cruisers and Captain James Kirk returns to the transformed USS Enterprise to investigate. The Enterprise (along with Leonard Nimoy and the cast from the acclaimed TV series) mobilise at warp speed to stop the alien intruder from its relentless flight towards Earth. Set in the 23rd Century, Kirk must meet these alien forces which come in the shape of an immense gas cloud that has been discovered on the edge of the galaxy. A great film and one you can watch again and again!

BEVERLY HILL COP III - PHILIPS

Eddie Murphy must be one of the funniest men around and he returns as Detroit Police Detective Axle Foley, the fast thinking wit with an uncanny ability to wind up in deep trouble.

Axle heads back to Beverly Hills and a series of unusual clues in the otherwise routine investigation of a brutal murder lead him to an unexpected setting for crime - a popular Los Angeles amusement park. Assisted by loyal Billy Rosewood, he finds himself on the ultimate thrill ride as he attempts to uncover a criminal network within the colourful fantasy land of Wonderland.

If you like a good solid story with plenty of action and loads of laughs, plus a great sound track, then here you have it! ■

