

DVD Review, Video: 'Paul Simon and Friends' a Riveting Tribute to Legendary Musician

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on May 13, 2009 - 1:32pm

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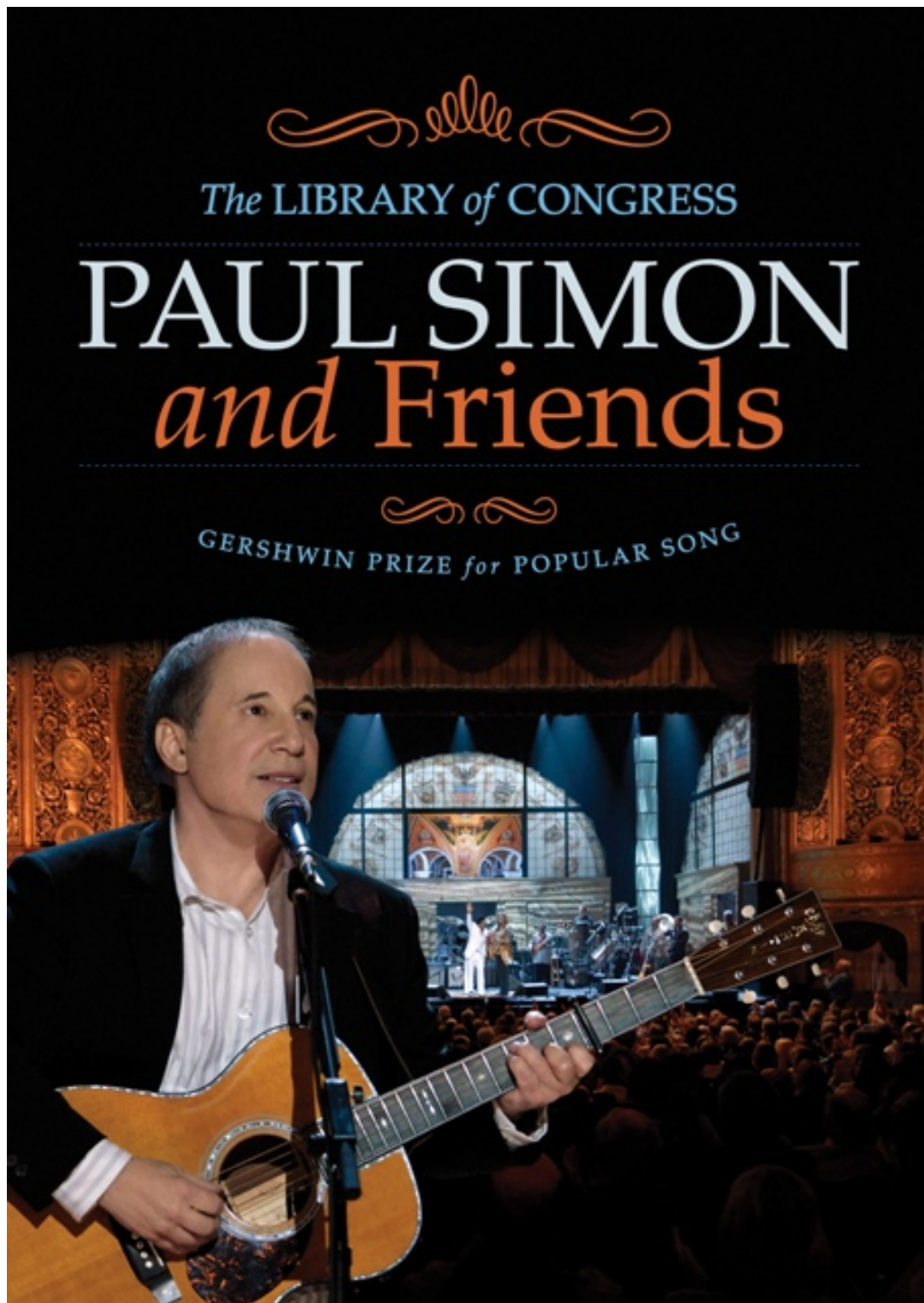
CHICAGO – There are dozens of concert films and music DVDs out there. Most of them are interchangeable collector's items made almost solely for diehard fans of the band or artist. Very few transcend the limitations of their sub-genre to become more than a mild diversion. "Paul Simon and Friends" is one of those very few.



DVD Rating: **5.0/5.0**

Full disclosure is probably necessary before getting too deeply into this review - I was born, raised, and still am a *huge* fan of both Simon & Garfunkel and Paul Simon's solo work. I still have vinyl copies, handed down from my parents, of most of Simon & Garfunkel's work and very few recordings impacted me the way "Graceland" did ringing through my childhood home.

So, of course, I'm prone to a more positive response to a tribute concert of one of my musical icons. But even with that said, it's hard to imagine that even the most casual fan wouldn't be blown away by this event, a show that I'm sure anyone lucky enough to actually attend will describe in hushed tones to their grandchildren.



Paul Simon and Friends will be released on DVD on May 19th, 2009.

Photo credit: Shout Factory

In May of 2007, the Library of Congress gathered together a group of musicians clearly influenced by Paul Simon and honored him as the inaugural recipient of the Gershwin Prize for Popular Song. Think about that for a few seconds. Of all the possible songwriting honorees in the world of music, they chose Paul Simon. And the event that followed, captured now in 5.1 Surround Sound, has been called “the greatest night of popular music ever presented in our nation’s capital”.

Simon performed that night (and was typically fantastic) but the “build-up” to Simon himself, the cavalcade of superstars adding their own take on classic Paul tunes was jaw-dropping.

Take just the first three songs, after an introduction by Bob Costas - Lyle Lovett covers “50 Ways to Leave Your Lover,” Alison Krauss, Shawn Colvin, and Jerry Douglas take on “The Boxer,” and Stephen Marley brings a wonderful reggae tinge to “Mother and Child Reunion”.

The concert film isn’t just a tribute by modern artists. Occasionally, it flashes back to show incredible performances from Simon’s own past, including an African concert with Miriam Makeba, a version of “Mrs. Robinson” at a tribute to Joe DiMaggio at Yankee Stadium, and his legendary version of “Homeward Bound” with George Harrison from “Saturday Night Live”.

But the Library of Congress show is the real draw. James Taylor, Marc Anthony, Art Garfunkel, Ladysmith Black Mambazo, Stevie Wonder, Philip Glass, and even Grover & Elmo of The Muppets. The concert is spectacular.

Of course, none of these other legendary artists, a few that could be considered for Gershwin Prizes themselves, steal any thunder from the man himself, who comes out to do five songs in the finale, representing the breadth of his entire career - “Diamonds on the Soles of Her Shoes” (with Ladysmith Black Mambazo), “Bridge Over Troubled Water” (with Art Garfunkel), “Father and Daughter,” “Me and Julio Down by the Schoolyard” (with Stevie Wonder), and “Loves Me Like a Rock” (with Wonder). That final quintet would make this DVD a must-buy for Simon fans on its own. The nearly two dozen other songs make it a must-buy for any music fan.

Shout Factory was kind enough to provide us with two clips from the show. Check them out for yourself and add the best music DVD in a long time to your collection when it’s released next week, May 19th, 2009.

“Loves Me Like a Rock” - Paul Simon and Stevie Wonder with the Dixie Hummingbirds

“Bridge Over Troubled Water” - Paul Simon and Art Garfunkel



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