

ous, for the most part, which is probably about as much as one could expect.

The Wachowski brothers' three Matrix pictures were too often grandiosely incoherent, but *V* (directed by James McTeigue, first assistant director on *The Matrix* trilogy) is relatively easy to follow, even as it moves rapidly from sequence to sequence. There are some lapses: the movie doesn't really explain the significance and origin of the nearly extinct red roses *V* leaves at the scenes of his crimes, and it's not clear why Evey is out violating

curfew in the movie's early minutes.

There are some other things you don't want to think about very much too, but in all its diverting cleverness, *V* has a more fundamental shortcoming: It represents an attempt at a moral and political statement imposed on a fantasy comic-book platform. The consequent product is a little unbalanced if you focus on this too intently. *V* is pop agit-prop, and it works quite well enough on that level. **av**



Neil Young in *Neil Young Heart of Gold*

OLD MAN YOUNG

Neil Young Heart of Gold

review by M. Faust

When The Who sang "Hope I die before I get old" back in 1966, it resonated with a generation that couldn't conceive of their music, to them so new, being performed by anyone over the age of 30.

Fortunately now that baby boomers are aging they've allowed their idols to grow up with them. It might be an embarrassment for Mick and Keith to still be rolling through the sports arenas of the world. But for musicians like Neil Young, who turned 60 in November, age is nothing but a blessing, deepening the pool of experience that he has always drawn on.

The man who once sang "It's better to burn out/Than it is to rust" shows that he is doing neither in *Neil Young: Heart of Gold*, a concert film of exquisite grace and heartstopping beauty.

Filed on August 18 and 19 last year at Nashville's Ryman Auditorium (former home of the Grand Old Opry), the film presents live performances of songs from Young's then-unreleased album *Prairie Wind*. The album was written and recorded in a burst of energy after Young, having just lost his father, learned that he had a potentially fatal brain aneurysm.

Fortunately surgery fixed Young up, and the reflective mood made for some magnificent music. The concert features a large cast of musicians, most of whom have worked with Young over the years, including steel guitarist Ben Keith, keyboardist Spooner Oldham, and singer Emmylou Harris (the world's best argument against hair dye).

There is also a string section, horns and a gospel chorus, but the arrangements don't try to cram every player into every song. All are used sparingly and none are ever wasted, so that we never become accustomed to them. The performance incorporates many of the influences that Young has explored over the years, with the exclusion of his electric side: those who prefer the bull goose skronk of

his work with Crazy Horse will have to settle for Jim Jarmusch's documentary *Year of the Horse*.

The songs, for those of you who like me haven't heard them before, are concerned with memory and the place of a single life in a larger context. But the closest they get to maudlin is "He Was the King," a gentle remembrance of a dog. Otherwise Young sings of lessons learned with neither resignation nor regret, but as keys to life that arrive better late than never. The most moving moment comes in "This Old Guitar," about the vintage guitar Young plays that once belonged to Hank Williams. As he sings "This old guitar ain't mine to keep/It's mine to play for awhile," the song reflects an awareness of spirituality that sent a shiver down my spine (not for the first time in the film, either).

The new songs are so good, and so pristinely presented, that I was frankly sorry when they ended and Young launched into a set of oldies, mostly from the albums *Harvest* and *Harvest Moon*.

Though it can't be denied that Young, after 40 years of performing, has a huge and worthwhile back catalogue to explore, the high point of this section comes when everyone onstage whose hands aren't otherwise occupied straps on a guitar for Ian Tyson's "Four Strong Winds," which Young aptly describes as "the most beautiful song I have ever heard in my life."

Heart of Gold was filmed by Jonathan Demme, who defined the concert film in 1984 with the Talking Heads' *Stop Making Sense*. Working in Super 16mm that imparts a pleasing touch of grain to the image (digital video is far too unforgiving for weathered faces), he keeps your attention focused on the music in a manner that is precisely the opposite of the "Saturday Night Live" school of swooping cameras and machine-gun editing. It reminded me of his video for New Order's "Perfect Kiss:" his work never draws attention to itself, never takes you outside of the music, though if you make the effort to pay attention to it you can see how hard he's working to capture just the right shot at every given moment.

Heart of Gold is a movie with a limited audience; it will only be enjoyed by people who love music. **av**

Plantasia
GARDEN & LANDSCAPESHOW

...The World Tour

WNY's only Garden & Landscape Show

Thursday, March 23 - Sunday, March 26 2005

- Blooming Gardens** - fully landscaped gardens with themes from around the world. Immerse yourself in inspirational lush landscapes.
- Children's Garden** - 2,500 square feet!! With activity center, play areas & adventure areas to delight any child.
- Garden Market** - shop for garden accessories and services. Choose from a wide selection of plants and garden equipment, tools & ornaments. Great deals!!
- Free Demonstrations** - complete schedule of educational seminars & demonstrations presented all day, every day. Bring your questions, ask the garden experts!

The Agri-Center @ The Fairgrounds, Hamburg NY

For more information call (716) 741-8047 or visit us at www.plantasianny.com

Thur. March 23 to Sat March 25

10:00am to 9:00pm

Sunday March 27

10:00am to 5:00pm

\$8.00 Adults - available at the door

\$1.00 off with this ad or

coupon available from plantasianny.com

\$6.00 Seniors - no other discounts apply

Free for children 12 and under

•AMPLE FREE PARKING•

"DARING, RADICAL AND REMARKABLE."

Dennis Dermody,
PAPER MAGAZINE

"Spectacular and exhilarating."
Michael Wolff, VANITY FAIR

"Two thumbs up!"
EBERT & ROEPER

FOR VENDETTA

AN UNCOMPROMISING VISION OF THE FUTURE FROM THE CREATORS OF THE MATRIX TRILOGY

R RESTRICTED
UNDER 17 REQUIRES ACCOMPANYING PARENT OR ADULT GUARDIAN
Strong Violence And Some Language

VIRTUAL STUDIOS DC COMICS TM & © DC COMICS WARNER BROS. PICTURES 2006 Warner Bros. Ent. All Rights Reserved

STARTS FRIDAY, MARCH 17

AMC MAPLE RIDGE 8
4276 Maple Road
716/833-9500

DIPSON THEATRES MARKET
ARCADE FILM & ARTS CENTRE
Downtown Theatre District
716/855-3022

INDEPENDENT FLIX
THEATRES 4901 Transit
Road 716/668-FLIX

REGAL CINEMAS
ELMWOOD CENTER 16
2001 Elmwood Avenue
800/FANDANGO #273

REGAL CINEMAS
HOLLYWOOD STADIUM 12
1-190 Niagara
Falls Blvd. Exit
800/FANDANGO #276

REGAL CINEMAS
QUAKER
CROSSING 18
3450 Amalia Drive
800/FANDANGO #277

REGAL CINEMAS
TRANSIT CENTER 18
Transit &
Wehrle Drive
800/FANDANGO #281

REGAL CINEMAS
WALDEN
GALLERIA
I-90 Exit 52
800/FANDANGO #1738

SPECIAL ENGAGEMENTS NO PASSES OR DISCOUNT COUPONS ACCEPTED CHECK THEATRE DIRECTORIES OR CALL FOR SOUND INFORMATION AND SHOWTIMES

SEE IT IN IMAX®

IMAX is a registered trademark of IMAX Corporation.

REGAL CINEMAS TRANSIT CENTER IMAX 6707 Transit Rd @ Transit Cntr. 716/632-4629