
DVD: 'Woodstock' delivers a lot to love

40TH ANNIVERSARY 'DIRECTOR'S CUT' BRINGS DEFINITIVE DOCUMENTARY ABOUT
LANDMARK 3-DAY CONCERT TO HOME SCREENS

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Tickets for the Woodstock Music and Arts Fair were \$7, \$14 and \$18 in advance for one, two or three days.

For those prices, you could witness performances by *Jimi Hendrix*; *Janis Joplin*; *The Who*; *Santana*; *Crosby, Stills & Nash* (with a guest appearance by *Neil Young*, who refused to be filmed); *Joan Baez*; *Jefferson Airplane*; *Sly & the Family Stone*; *Arlo Guthrie*; *Country Joe & the Fish*; *Ten Years After*; *Richie Havens* and *John Sebastian* just to name quite a few, and all on one stage, in the middle of a cow pasture owned by a Bethel, N.Y., farmer named *Max Yasgur*.

That seemed moderately pricy in August 1969, especially for many longhaired free spirits who seldom were flush with so much spare change. But eventually the fences were cut, and the freeloaders flooded in to turn the festival into a small city of nearly "half a million strong" as the *Joni Mitchell*-penned CSNY hit goes.

It was the crowning moment in the late-'60s counterculture movement against the war in Vietnam and the period's racial strife. It was a movement — from then on dubbed the "Woodstock Nation" — that pleaded for universal love and understanding and enhanced its hopefulness by getting high and grooving to some of the greatest music ever to come out of rock, and rock fused with folk, jazz and blues.

And this was its peak celebration, miraculously peaceful considering the unexpectedly massive number of people who found themselves struggling against poor sanitation, inadequate first aid provisions, bad weather and food shortages.

Some came in the true spirit of peace and love; others just showed up for the sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll. Almost everyone got muddy.

Director *Michael Wadleigh* captured it all on film for the 1970 Oscar-winning documentary "Woodstock," and the 40th anniversary edition DVD, "*Woodstock — 3 Days of Peace and Music: The Director's Cut*," brings bonus flower-power euphoria to the home screen — preferably a very large, high-def screen hooked up to a 5.1 surround sound system.

It's the closest one can come to experiencing the visual and aural splendor of the sweeping, frequently split-screen version originally shown in theaters and never intended for tragically limited standard television screens.

And the bonuses range from generous to extravagant, depending on which version one can afford or is willing to pay for. The limited, numbered Blu-ray and DVD "Ultimate Collector's Edition" versions contain two extra hours of performance footage, some of it newly discovered, much of it never before seen, including performances from Baez, Santana, The Who, Jefferson Airplane, Country Joe McDonald, *Canned Heat*, *Joe Cocker* and five (*Creedence Clearwater Revival*, *Paul Butterfield*, *Grateful Dead*, *Johnny Winter* and *Mountain*), who played the festival but never appeared in any film version.

The "Ultimate" package also includes a third hour of bonus material featuring interviews with *Martin Scorsese* (one of the original editors of the film), Wadleigh, *Hugh Hefner*, *Eddie Kramer* (chief on-site engineer and Hendrix producer-engineer) and others involved in the film and concert production. Other segments include "3 Days in a Truck, No Rain! No Rain! No Rain!" and "Living Up to Idealism."

Other extras in the limited box include a 60-plus-page reprint of a *Life* magazine commemorative issue, a Lucite lenticular display of vintage festival photos, festival memorabilia and an iron-on patch with the dove and guitar Woodstock emblem.

The Blu-ray "UCE" sells for \$69.99, and the loaded DVD sells for \$59.99. Then there's the no-frills two-disc "Special Edition" going for \$24.98, about the same price of a three-day pass bought at the Woodstock gate Aug. 18, 1968, the first day of the festival. It offers the same remastered picture and sound, without the extra performances or

mementos.

Still, it's almost worth the extra bread to check out *John Fogerty* and Creedence ripping through "Born on the Bayou," "I Put a Spell on You" and "Keep on Chooglin'," a hulking *Leslie West* and Mountain tearing off "Beside the Sea" and "Southbound Train," Winter speed-riffing through "Mean Town Blues" and the Airplane flying "3/5 of a Mile in 10 Seconds."

At any price, you can revel in some of the most glorious moments of an idealistic age when anything and everything positive seemed possible, and/or grieve over the fact that it all seems "a long time gone." Then take solace in the knowledge that this music is still alive and well, and timeless.

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