

hits, including “Hold On Loosely” and “Caught Up in You.” On each, guitarist Jeff Carlisi ripped super-melodic guitar solos, and his closing lead on the latter is a perfect blend of blues, rock, and pop licksmanship.

It’s one of several highlights on *Icon*, a 12-track greatest hits package. Another is 1980’s “Rockin’ Into the Night,” which showed .38 Special’s early experiments with pop forms while keeping one foot in heavy Southern rock. Here, guitarists Carlisi and Don Barnes play brutish riffs and harmonies under the tight vocals, creating a compelling formula for radio airplay. If you want to relive more of .38 Special’s brand of ’80s pop, the hits are here and ready for a nostalgic spin in the car – preferably a DeLorean or Pontiac Fiero. – **Pete Prown**



Roxanne Potvin Play

Black Hen Music

Roxanne Potvin is a rare bird. While still on the rise as a young blues guitarist and singer with old-school instincts, she put down her blue Tele and brought her singer/songwriter side to the forefront.

Her music is still rhythm-rich and, from the start of *Play*, she proves the new thing is sussed.

Except for a brief return to the Tele for the solo in “Dis-Moi Que Tu M’aimes,” Potvin hands over electric/lead responsibilities to producer Steve Dawson. Potvin openly expresses her admiration for the Beatles and in clever ways, works it into her songs. Darker tunes like “Coral Reef Fishes” and “Barricade” feel similar to late Beatles/early solo-era Lennon while “You Told Me” is like the better of McCartney’s odes to life. Potvin has a “damn the torpedoes” attitude in her writing and presentation. There’s a wicked humor in her brilliant funky cover of “I’m Too Sexy” and an inherent gutsiness in “Pretty Girls” that may remind you of Chrissie Hynde or (to cross artistic genres) a feisty, more-musical Jimmy Cayne.

Potvin reminds the listener why this music is so good – and for some, why they pick up a guitar and make some of their own. – **Rick Allen**



Al Di Meola Pursuit of Radical Rhapsody

Self-distributed

What separates shtick from a deep and narrow exploration of a particular artistic genre? If someone repeats the same thing with little by way of variation, it’s shtick. But if an artist finds new ways to examine a genre, that’s exploration. Al Di Meola is a musical explorer of Magellanic proportions.

Di Meola has kept up a busy schedule

the past 37 years. Like most of his albums, *Pursuit of Radical Rhapsody* uses Latin-tinged melodic themes. But instead of a small fusion group, here he employs a larger, lusher musical force he calls New World Sinfonia. Its personnel include Kevin Seddiki on second guitar, Fausto Beccalossi on accordion, Victor Miranda on acoustic bass, and Gumbi Ortiz and Peter Kascas on percussion.

Twelve of the 14 cuts are original; the exceptions are “Strawberry Fields” by Lennon and McCartney, and “Over the Rainbow” by Harold Arlen, which here is dedicated to Les Paul and features the clean, elegant lines Di Meola is

known for. The results are ear candy of the highest order. – **Steven Stone**



Mike Seeger and Peggy Seeger Fly Down Little Bird

Appleseed

The late Mike Seeger was one of the early-’60s folk revival’s most important figures, as one-third of the New Lost City Ramblers, but he recently contrib-

uted to projects by Ralph Stanley and Ry Cooder, as well as the award winning *Raising Sand* by Alison Krauss and Robert Plant. His final solo album was 2007’s *Early Southern Guitar Sounds*.

The multi-instrumentalist died in August ’09, at 75. He was the older brother of folk singer Peggy Seeger, widow of British folk singer, playwright, and left-wing activist Ewan MacColl. Their mother, composer/pianist Ruth Crawford Seeger, served as transcriber of John and Alan Lomax’s field recordings of old-time American music. So, as kids, the Seegers were exposed to the real-deal folk traditions of American



Duane Eddy

Rousing Twang Fest

Roots-rock maven Deke Dickerson has staged eight Guitar Geek Festivals thus far, each January in Anaheim, invariably and conveniently scheduled the same weekend as NAMM. This DVD documents his seventh, in 2010.

Nerdably pioneer “Crazy” Joe Tritschler wailing Little Richard’s “I Got It” while picking a miniature Burns Bison replica is something you can only see at Geek Fest (or in Enon, Ohio). Another off-the-wall highlight was a battery of electric 12-strings (17 in all – a tuner’s nightmare) playing “Hey, Electric 12-String Band,” with Dickerson on vocals, to the tune of you-know-what. It was actually quite musical as well as visual, with Danelectros, Voxes, Mosrites, a Belzouki, at least one Rick, a Fender Coronado and an Antigua acoustic/elec-

tric, and the Dekester’s heart-shaped Murph.

Joel Paterson played with almost as many acts as the host. The Chicagoan pulled quadruple duty, sitting in with Tritschler; backing 94-year-old blues legend Honeyboy Edwards; as part of the “History of the Steel Guitar” segment (playing lap steel as well as backing other steelers on his ES-295); and fronting his own trio, the Modern Sounds.

This amazingly versatile roots trio’s set featured Paterson’s impressive fingerpicked arrangement of “Caravan” and upright bassist Beau Sample singing Andre Williams’ “Bacon Fat.” The aforementioned steel portion – which included Don Ho sidekick Duke Ching and Merle Haggard’s pedal steeler of 40-plus years, Norm

Hamlet – was more workshop than concert, and may wear viewers out a bit, but... naw, this is



Various artists Deke’s Guitar Geek Festival 2010

Major Label Video

for guitar geeks, after all.

What made the Ramones tribute sheer genius was the respect and conviction with

which Dickerson threw himself (and his Ventures II Mosrite) into it. With Tom Kenny, of “Spongebob Squarepants” fame, as Joey, Deke nailed Johnny’s all-downstrokes chainsaw rhythm.

Instrumentals like “Torquay,” “Bulldog,” and “Vaquero” can mean only one thing: the Fireballs. Armed with a Fender Jazzmaster, the seminal two-guitar band’s lead guitarist, George Tomasco, played dead-on versions, aided by Three Balls Of Fire’s Mike Vernon.

The DVD’s bonus feature is Dickerson’s demonstration and history of a Howard double-neck made for Duane Eddy, with standard guitar and six-string bass necks (both made of fiberglass). If you’re old enough and lucky enough, you might have seen Eddy play the space-age instrument on “American Bandstand” in 1960.

And it was Eddy who topped 2010’s bill – as if anyone could follow him. With a tone as deep as the Grand Canyon, he led Deke’s Ecco-Fonics through such favorites as “Moovin’ & Groovin’,” “Detour,” “Ramrod,” and his classic “Rebel Rouser.” It was a real coup getting the King Of Twang to play with a group he’d never fronted, with only one rehearsal. But Eddy paid the band perhaps the ultimate compliment by using them again for Ponderosa Stomp and featuring saxophonist Ron Dziubla on his upcoming CD, *Road Trip* – stepping into the formidable shoes of Steve Douglas and Jim Horn in fine style. – **Dan Forte**