



## INNOVATORS IN MUSIC (6 x 60')

GENRE: MUSIC PERFORMANCE & PROFILE

**INNOVATORS IN MUSIC** is a series of six documentary profiles about great musicians. The idea is to give the voice to the artist, to explore the creative process, songwriting, other areas of artistic interest, to try and delve a little deeper, take a little more time to express things. Taken together the six shows should reveal a glimpse into the dynamic world of rock'n'roll's influential music makers.

***The Birthday Ramble.* LEVON HELM.** On most Saturday nights since January 2004, LEVON HELM has hosted evenings of music at the "barn," his home studio in Woodstock, New York. These magical nights are called The Midnight Ramble Sessions. On May 23, 2009 Helm celebrated his 69th birthday at the Midnight Ramble and the Levon Helm Band gave birth to a night of stage magic- The Birthday Ramble! The performance is a veritable tour through the American songbook. After overcoming seemingly insurmountable odds, Helm released *Dirt Farmer*, his first solo recording in 25 years, and won a Grammy. Rolling Stone hailed Midnight Ramble as "2008's Best Jam Session" and the Americana Music Association bestowed him the Artist of the Year Award.

***The Real Folk Blues.* STEVE EARLE** is an American singer-songwriter primarily known for his rock and country music, but also for his political views. He is also an actor who played in three seasons of HBO's *THE WIRE*; an activist; he has written and directed a play, published books, and is, of course, a 13 time Grammy nominee - 2 time winner. Filmed in Knoxville, Tennessee on a hot summer day in June, we captured a remarkably candid, and open interview Steve. He addresses many of his passions: songwriting, history, politics, American identity, the elusive nature of art and love, his novel, abortion, and the death penalty. Not to mention Charlie Parker, Heroin, Jail, addiction and what 7 marriages can do to a guy.

Watch as the live show blends Mr. Earle's commentary and one begins to sense a rare look at how the songs and ideas of a unique artist come to life.

***The Northampton Shuffle.* BILLY BRAGG** is an English musician and songwriter who artfully blends elements of folk music, punk rock and protest songs. His lyrics often embrace romantic and political themes, hence his alter ego *Mr. Love and Justice*. In a music career spanning more than 30 years, Bragg has written some of the most memorable songs of his generation. And as a died-in-the-wool progressive activist he has inspired legions to seek freedom and justice for those less fortunate. We caught up with a warm and friendly Billy on a cool and rainy July day in Massachusetts. We spoke at length about the role of political music in society, overcoming cynicism, the death of his father, of engaging his audience politically, his profound love for all things Smokey



Robinson, the Constitutional Monarchy, raising kids who play loud electric guitars poorly, Thin Lizzy, Pete Seeger, Bob Dylan, English identity, more Bob Dylan, and of course, the elusive alchemical art of finding a great song hidden deep, down inside.



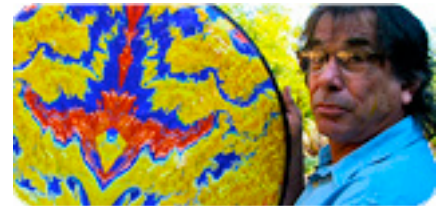
Billy entertains locals at free storefront afternoon performance! Rednecks demand less politics and more entertainment! (a real live dust-up!)

**Talking Drums. MICKEY HART:** Alongside his work of nearly 30 years as a drummer with iconic rock band the *Grateful Dead*, MICKEY HART has flourished as a solo artist, painter, bandleader and the author of several books. His lifelong interest in ethnomusicology, along with his travels and love of all things percussion have led him to amass a remarkable collection of instruments, (the world's largest private collection of drums), and to collaborate with musical masters the world over.



We were fortunate to spend some time at Mickey's home and studio in a remote area of northern California. Mr. Hart generously shares his thoughts about music, art, space, vibrations, percussion, the Big Bang, the Grateful Dead, and the impromptu miracle of true collaborative improvisation. At his home is Mickey's performance is joined by Indian tabla master Zakir Hussein and Nigerian talking drum guru Sikiru Adepoju for an exclusive session of music recorded just for this series!

**The Eternal Kansas City. SONIC YOUTH.** Thurston Moore and Lee Ranaldo arrived in Manhattan in the late '70's, just in time for the end of punk rock and its avant-garde cousin, no wave. According to Rolling Stone Sonic Youth is the "...avatar of noisy, underground guitar rock. After making the transition from uncompromising avant-rockers in the early '80s to indie guitar-pop trailblazers by decade's end, the group became the alternative-music world's brightest beacon."



In 2009, Sonic Youth's sound continues to influence and push boundaries, and though the band has always written memorable songs, their passion for wild experimentation has never slowed. With never-before-seen footage from the band's early years and extensive commentary from guitarists Thurston Moore and Lee Renaldo.



**Talkin' Rock n' Roll Blues. DAVE STEWART.** As a 30-piece orchestra digs into the opening riff of his haunting track Sweet Dreams, DAVE STEWART, one of the most respected and accomplished artists in modern music, seems to enjoy a rare moment of looking back on his astonishing legacy. Over the past 25 years, Stewart has sold more than 75-million albums worldwide with *Eurythmics* partner Annie Lennox. But Stewart is already onto to his next creative idea well before the second chorus begins.

Bob Dylan describes Stewart as "a fearless innovator" and it is exactly that approach to his life and his work that has led him to become one of the most sought-after writers and music producers in the world. It has also given Stewart the freedom to extend his talents well beyond the music studio, including photography, as featured our encounter with Stewart at the opening of his photography exhibit at the Morrison Hotel Gallery in New York's Bowery district.

