

"GIGI" WHIZ:
Louis Jourdan's
crooning glory



Oscar Sings, Swings, Stings

Oscar's taste in music has proven rather, uh, debatable over the years. When Hollywood churned out musicals with regularity, the pickings were plentiful and Academy Award winners included genuine charmers like "Over the Rainbow" (1939), "Baby, It's Cold Outside" (1949), and "Gigi" (1958). But as that genre faded, voters turned more and more to bathetic ballads—not always without reason, since during the '80s it was often hard to find five songs written for the movies that were worth nominating.

THE ENVELOPE PLEASE . . .

ACADEMY AWARD WINNING SONGS (1934–1993) is an admirable compilation, but it follows a similar path in quality. The first few CDs are chock-full of memorable tunes, the

last seems rather thin. What's more, many of the recent tunes are not presented in their original version, since rights were difficult to obtain. In some cases, that's good: Billie Holiday, not Sinatra, leaves her stamp on "All the Way," and instead of the schmaltzy pop ballads from the end credits of *Beauty and the Beast* and *Aladdin*, we get the far better versions sung during the movie itself. More often than not, however, it's bad: Shirley Bassey sings "The Way We Were" instead of Barbra Streisand, and someone named Diana DeWitt sings "Flashdance . . . What a Feeling." The saving grace is Rhino Entertainment's typically witty and informative packaging. CD, \$64.98; cassette, \$44.98. MICHAEL GILTZ