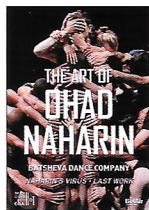


The Art of Ohad Naharin

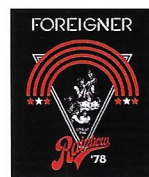
★★★
(2018) 129 min. DVD: \$24.99, Blu-ray: \$29.99. Bel Air Classics (dist. by Naxos of America).



Ohad Naharin, the artistic director of Israel's Bat-sheva Dance Company from 1990 to 2018, is called "Mr. Gaga" for the idiosyncratic "movement language" that he devised for the troupe (see review of *Mr. Gaga* in VL-1/18). *The Art of Ohad Naharin* compiles two of his cutting-edge ballets. *Naharin's Virus* (2002) finds the company dancers writhing—individually and in various groups—to Arab folk music in front of a wall they scribble on until the word "plastelina" appears (an obviously distorted reference to Palestine). Meanwhile, a suited figure atop the wall declaims insults from Peter Handke's absurdist play *Offending the Audience*, and the piece ends in frenzied movement as the dancers attempt to scale the wall, followed by a return to sedateness. In *Last Work* (2015), set to a score by Grisca Lichtenberger, the dancers engage in brief solos and duets that often take unusual forms—one face-covered man waves a large white flag and another cleans his rifle in an almost lustful way—while a young woman in a blue dress runs on a treadmill in the background. Towards the end, a sleazy emcee appears and begins wrapping everything—his microphone, the dancers, the running woman—in packing tape. What the meaning of either piece might be, or whether any specific meaning is even intended, is left to the judgment of the individual viewer, but both works—filmed at the Théâtre National de Chaillot in Paris (in 2014 and 2017 respectively)—carry a powerful visceral impact. Presented in PCM stereo, this is recommended. (F. Swietek)

Foreigner: Live at the Rainbow '78 ★★★

(1978) 75 min. DVD: \$15.98, Blu-ray: \$19.98. Eagle Rock Entertainment (avail. from most distributors).



After their eponymous 1977 debut album crested the Top 20 in the *Billboard* charts for a year, Foreigner played London's Rainbow Theatre in April 1978, serving up a blistering 12-song set. The classic lineup featured Lou Gramm (vocals), Mick Jones (lead guitar), Ian McDonald (guitars, flute), Al Greenwood (keyboards), Ed Gagliardi (bass), and Dennis Elliott (drums). Today, the blues-based rock band's lyrics come across as silly ("And I guess it's just the woman in you/That brings out the man in me") and even borderline offensive ("Are you old enough?"), but along with Journey, Bad Company, and Styx, Foreigner was able to command a solid arena-rock fan base thanks to a number of catchy songs. Although their

megahits "Juke Box Hero" and "I Wanna Know What Love Is" were still in the future, the band in '78 still had some fine material to draw from, including the singles "Feels Like the First Time" and "Cold As Ice," the driving "Long, Long Way from Home," the power ballads "Woman Oh Woman" and "Fool for You Anyway," and the prog-rock-y "Starrider." A special treat is hearing a song from their then-upcoming release *Double Vision* that went on to become a big hit: "Hot-Blooded." Although the image is presented in a boxy aspect ratio, the remastered visuals are clear and the sound is excellent. Presented in DTS 5.1, Dolby Digital 5.1 and stereo on DVD, and DTS-HD 5.1 and LCPM stereo on Blu-ray, this is recommended. (R. Pitman)

Il Giasone ★★★1/2

(2017) 182 min. In Italian w/ English subtitles. DVD: \$39.99, Alpha Classics (dist. by Naxos of America).



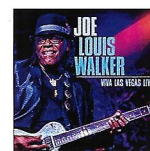
Francesco Cavalli's 1649 opera receives a delightfully eccentric interpretation in this 2017 production from Switzerland's Grand Théâtre de Geneve. A retelling of the Greek myth chronicling Jason's pursuit of the Golden Fleece, the staging places more emphasis on romantic entanglements than Harryhausen-worthy adventure, with Jason and Queen Medea deepening their emotional bond—much to the consternation of King Aegus, husband of Medea, and Hypsipyle, Jason's jettisoned lover and mother of their children. Jason's procrastination in his mission also raises the ire of Hercules, brawnier of the Argonauts, and their arguments are the most entertaining aspect of this mounting, with scrawny countertenor Valer Sabadus as Jason in an intellectual duel with bass Alexander Milev (fitted into a musclebound costume decorated with tattoos) as Hercules. Stage director Serena Sinigaglia keeps the action moving at a solid pace on an abstract stone setting featuring a somewhat phallic pillar. Costume designer Ezio Toffolutti steals the show with playful creations: the Argonauts are presented as steampunk ruffians, Hypsipyle's ladies in waiting wear the finest 1920s travel clothing, and Mary Faminear's Cupid is encased in a fat suit with delightfully shabby wings. Performed by the Cappella Mediterranea under the baton of Leonardo García Alarcón, this is a handsomely framed presentation for contemporary audiences of Cavalli's rarely-performed masterwork. Presented in 5.1 surround sound, this is highly recommended. (P. Hall)

Joe Louis Walker: Viva Las Vegas Live

★★★
(2018) 85 min. DVD: \$19.95 (audio CD included). Music Video Distributors (avail. from most distributors).

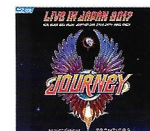
Prolific recording artist and guitar legend

Joe Louis Walker, aged 69, has a fascinating history as a former teen prodigy who played with the likes of John Lee Hooker, Muddy Waters, and Jimi Hendrix before walking away from his chosen music, the blues, to pursue gospel for several years. Eventually returning to the blues format, Walker made a name for himself as a virtuoso player, composer, producer, and collaborator (Bonnie Raitt, James Cotton). In this 2018 concert filmed at Las Vegas's Boulder Station, the still-youthful Walker plays a lively 10-song set backed by a spare crew of bass, drums, and keyboards. Mining every opportunity to turn a solo into a lengthy expression of emotional nuance, Walker hits the ground running with the highly-charged manifesto "I'm Not Messin' Around," followed by songs of lament, yearning, and passion. The excitement ramps up when Walker switches guitars and starts playing with a grittier, crunchier sound and different tuning, turning powerful tracks such as "Soldier for Jesus" and "You Don't Love Me Girl" into taut rockers. Also featuring "Sugar Mama," "Young Girls Blues," and "Too Drunk to Drive Drunk," this is an engaging concert with solid camerawork that captures Walker's fingers crawling with spidery finesse over his strings. Presented in stereo and packaged with a bonus audio CD, this is recommended. (T. Keogh)



Journey: Live in Japan 2017 ★★

(2017) 131 min. DVD: \$29.99 (audio CDs included), Blu-ray: \$32.99 (audio CDs included). Eagle Rock Entertainment (avail. from most distributors).



Hard to say exactly who is the audience for this 2017 concert filmed at Japan's legendary Budokan arena in Tokyo featuring decades-old rock band Journey. General rock 'n' roll fans would likely welcome an oldies road show with a large helping of the band's considerable catalog of hits, but instead the group performs 1981's *Escape* and 1983's *Frontiers* in their entirety (or near-entirety—"Troubled Child" from the latter album is absent). So while it's easy to enjoy "Don't Stop Believin'," "Who's Crying Now," "Separate Ways (Worlds Apart)," and "Faithfully," non-hardcore Journey fans will likely (and quite justifiably) be unfamiliar with such mundane tunes as "Lay It Down," "Dead or Alive," and "Chain Reaction." On the other hand, serious fans who cherish the original albums may not be overly excited since lead singer Steve Perry is long gone, replaced by admittedly uncanny sing-alike Arnel Pineda (although for some reason, three of the songs are sung by "additional musician" and extra keyboardist Travis Thibodaux). Anyone who notices where the camera lingers will be quite aware that this is The Neal Schon Show, the