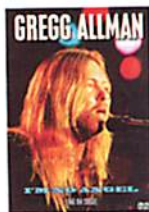


emanates greatness," "one who has death in his pouch," and "one who never dies" (Kuti changed his middle name from the Anglo-Saxon Ransome). By the mid-'80s, Kuti had released dozens of records, faced numerous arrests for speaking out against governmental corruption, and married his female backing singers. Concerning his childhood, Kuti notes that his father was a pastor and that English was the family language. Later, Kuti studied in England and lived in America, where black leaders such as Malcolm X raised his consciousness, after which he returned to Lagos to pursue his music career—choosing to sing in English, so that everyone could understand him. Along with interviews, Marks incorporates clips from Fela's 1984 appearance at Glastonbury. The companion piece, *Berliner Jazztage '78*, serves up a vintage set broadcast on German and Nigerian television, which begins with Quincy Joppes' introduction of the gold-suited Africa 70 ensemble (including drummer/band leader Tony Allen), followed by Kuti's emergence in a boldly-printed pantsuit to say a few words before launching into the jazz-funk number "V.I.P.," his term for "vagabonds in power." As Kuti alternates on organ and saxophone, six purple-clad ladies arrive to dance and respond to his calls. In the third track, "Pansa Pansa," Kuti encourages the audience to join in. He rounds out the night with "Power Show" and "Cross Examination of the African Colonial Soldier." Even though Kuti is in a talkative mood throughout, the performances make it all worthwhile. Recommended. (K. Fennessy)

### Gregg Allman: I'm No Angel—Live on Stage

★★★  
(2012) 52 min. DVD: \$16.95.  
Music Video Distributors (avail.  
from most distributors).



Opening for Stevie Ray Vaughan at Nashville's Cannery in 1988, Gregg Allman's style here doesn't differ much from that of his famed band, the Allman Brothers, although jazz and fusion play a more prominent role through the combination of organ (Allman), piano (Tim Heding), and two percussionists (David Toler and Chaz Trippy, who manages a quartet of congas). Once Allman starts to sing, however—with his nicotine-stained growl—Southern soul and Chicago blues enter the picture (and never leave). While possessing one of the most distinctive voices in rock and roll, Allman had lost some clarity by the 1980s and his mumbling renders many of the lyrics indistinguishable, while still always managing to put the requisite emotion across. No one can replace Allman's late brother, Duane, who died in 1971, but Allman Brothers' guitarist Dan Toler still serves up plenty of fluid solos. The hour-shy 10-song set combines solo tracks and classic Allman covers, including Blind Willie McTell's "Statesboro Blues" and

"One Way Out," the latter credited to both Elmore James and Sonny Boy Williamson II. The performances are solid, even if Allman's solo material—mostly from 1988's *Just Before the Bullets Fly*—isn't especially memorable, with the exception of 1986's "I'm No Angel," the title track of his third studio recording, and an apt summation of Allman's turbulent life. The mullet hairstyles, shiny dusters, and rolled-sleeve blazers scream '80s, but some of the music is timeless. Recommended. (K. Fennessy)

### The Groundhogs: Live at the Astoria ★★½

(1998) 81 min. DVD: \$11.98.  
Eagle Rock Entertainment  
(avail. from most distributors).



In a taped segment, founder Tony McPhee introduces this 1998 concert, noting that the lineup of the blues-rock outfit has changed several times since the 1960s, and apologizing for the condition of his voice as he was recovering from the flu at the time. In the 11-track set filmed in London, the three-piece band powers through a combination of originals and covers, heavy on the Howlin' Wolf, since they were on tour in support of their album *Hogs in Wolf's Clothing*. Although McPhee was no longer a young gun, he has no problem keeping up with younger comrades Pete Correa on drums and Eric Chipulina on bass. And even though his voice isn't at peak strength, it doesn't really matter, since he keeps the emphasis on the instrumental interplay, especially his guitar-playing (although the Wolf selections almost feel more like Hubert Sumlin covers). After prolonged applause from the audience, the gentlemen return to encore with Muddy Waters' "Down in the Bottom." Visually, this is a fairly straightforward gig, other than a few op-art slides that materialize behind the band on occasion (with slow motion and multiple-exposure effects added during post-production). Although McPhee chats between tracks, it isn't always possible to make out what he's saying—a problem that more audio sweetening of the Dolby Digital stereo mix might have fixed. A strong optional purchase. (K. Fennessy)

### Hungarian Rhapsody: Queen—Live in Budapest ★★½

(1986) 118 min. DVD: \$14.98,  
Blu-ray: \$19.98. Eagle Rock  
Entertainment (avail. from most  
distributors).



Arena rock superstars Queen take their act behind the Iron Curtain for this 22-song 1986 concert before an audience of 80,000 in Budapest. Fronted by flamboyant lead singer Freddie Mercury (on his last tour with the group; Mercury

would die of AIDS in 1991), with Brian May on guitar (one of the few instantly recognizable guitarists in rock), John Deacon on bass, and Roger Taylor on drums, the band was at a new popular height, thanks to an electrifying performance beamed round the world at 1985's Live Aid concert. Touring in support of their 12th album, *A Kind of Magic* (also considered the unofficial soundtrack to the film *Highlander*), the quartet open with their then-current hit "One Vision," followed by abbreviated versions of "Tie Your Mother Down" and "Tear It Up" (among others) before finally settling in to deliver solid renditions of "A Kind of Magic," "Under Pressure," and "Who Wants to Live Forever" (the last especially poignant with lyrics that could stand as a commentary on the terrible sentence of AIDS: "there's no chance for us/it's all decided for us"). Not surprisingly—given the locale—the rousing "I Want to Break Free" resonated with the audience, as did a Hungarian folk song the band played as Mercury read the foreign lyrics penned on his hand. Fans of '70s Queen may be a bit disappointed by the '80s-heavy setlist (notable omissions include "Somebody to Love," "Killer Queen," "Another One Bites the Dust," and "Play the Game"), but there are enough big hits here—such as "Bohemian Rhapsody," "Crazy Little Thing Called Love," "We Will Rock You," and "Radio Ga Ga"—to satisfy most. Triumphant closing with "We Are the Champions," this is a winning concert—handsomely filmed by János Zsombolyai (one of Hungary's leading cinematographers)—that is only briefly interrupted by four short segments of each of the band members having fun in Budapest. Presented in DTS-5.1 (DTS-HD 5.1 on the Blu-ray version) and LPCM stereo, extras include the archival featurette "A Magic Year," and liner notes. Also available in deluxe editions with two bonus audio CDs of the concert (DVD: \$34.98, Blu-ray: \$39.98), this is highly recommended. (R. Pitman)

### I Puritani ★★★

(2009) 173 min. In Italian w/  
English subtitles. DVD or Blu-  
ray: \$29.99. Opus Arte (dist. by  
Naxos of America).



The last work by Vincenzo Bellini (1801–1835), *I Puritani*—set after the English civil war of the 1640s—suffers from a weak libretto that draws on the political turmoil merely as the basis for a standard-issue *bel canto* romance (complete with obligatory mad scene). But the music is both beautiful and historically important, serving as a bridge between Rossini and Verdi in Italian opera. In this 2009 production from De Nederlandse Opera, conductor Giuliano Carella brings out the passion and color of the orchestral writing, and he has restored from the original 1835 Paris