

Bach's (Nos. 1 and 5 of the six), beautifully performed on an (unfortunately unidentified) instrument of the composer's time by the masterly Anner Bylisma (some of his tempi are a bit deliberate, but he savors every measure). Optional. Aud: C, P. (F. Swietek)

Jacqueline du Pré: In Portrait ★★★

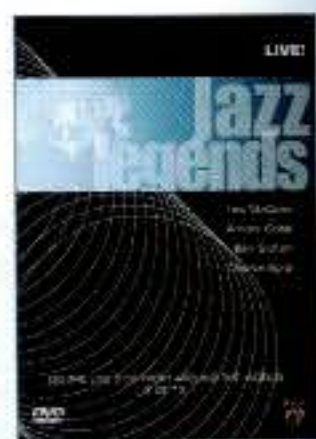
(2004) 2 discs. 155 min. DVD: \$29.99. Opus Arte (dist. by Naxos of America). Color cover.



The tragic yet uplifting life of the brilliant British cellist Jacqueline du Pré, whose career was cut short in 1973 at the age of 28 by multiple sclerosis—but who remained a potent force in English musical life until her death 14 years later (she is still remembered fondly, and was the subject of the 1988 feature film *Hilary and Jackie*)—is celebrated in this reverential but moving double-disc set. The major piece here is the second version of Christopher Nupen's portrait of du Pré, *Jacqueline du Pré and the Elgar Cello Concerto*, originally made in 1967 while she was still active but supplemented in 1981 with additional material filmed following the onset of her illness. The film concludes with a complete performance of what was her signature work—the Elgar concerto—conducted by her husband Daniel Barenboim, whose romance with du Pré is charmingly recounted. The DVD adds to this a complete performance of the Beethoven "Ghost" Trio, in which she and Barenboim are joined by violinist Pinchas Zukerman; a couple of remembrances by Nupen; a gallery of photos; and a nearly 40-minute compilation of snippets from other films on artistic subjects—composers, performers, and individual works—made by Nupen over the years, which he hopes to eventually issue on DVD (a sort of oversized preview reel, one might say). The relatively few recordings du Pré made during her abbreviated career are cherished by many collectors, who will surely appreciate the opportunity to acquire this lovely tribute—presented in LPCM stereo—to her life and work. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (F. Swietek)

Jazz Legends Live! 2 ★★

(2004) 47 min. DVD: \$9.95. Music Video Distributors (avail. from most distributors). Color cover.



"Frustrating" might be the best description for this collection of eight performances by four different jazz musicians and their groups. On the one hand, it's a chance to experience some good players (tenor saxophonist Arnett Cobb, guitarist Charlie Byrd, and pianists Ben Sidran and Les McCann) serving up some pretty fair tunes in front of appreciative audiences. Byrd,

one of the few guitarists to use an acoustic, nylon-stringed instrument (and a classical picking technique) to play jazz, is especially good on two standards, Fats Waller's "Jitterbug Waltz" and Jobim's "Wave"; Cobb, with his big Texas sound, swings mightily on Milt Jackson's "Bags' Groove"; and McCann is greasy and soulful on an extended "Someday We'll Meet Again." (Sidran is less appealing, leading his band in a mostly-electric, bland "smooth jazz" medium and singing, well, poorly; he's joined onstage by rock 'n' roller Steve Miller, a frequent Sidran collaborator.) But a kind of low-rent vibe permeates the entire proceedings: the graphics are cheesy; the accompanying text bios are informative but filled with spelling and punctuation mistakes; not a single recording date, location, or musician other than the leaders is identified; and while the sound and visuals are clear enough, they lack warmth and a certain dynamic quality. Larger music collections may want to consider *Jazz Legends Live! 2*, but for most this is a far from essential purchase. [Note: *Jazz Legends Live! 3* (with Ahmad Jamal, Ron Carter, and McCoy Tyner) and *Jazz Legends Live! 4* (with Charlie Byrd and Stephane Grappelli) are also newly available.] Aud: P. (S. Graham)

Mary J. Blige: Live From Los Angeles ★★1/2

(2004) 95 min. DVD: \$19.98. BMG Distribution (avail. from most distributors). Color cover.



Despite its resemblance to a show by, say, Janet Jackson—tight choreography, smooth moves, and good musicians (along with what sound like some pre-recorded tracks)—Mary J. Blige's act is considerably earthier, funkier, and deeper in the groove. But when you call someone "the Queen of Hip-Hop Soul," she better *really* have it goin' on—after all, take the "Hip-Hop" out of that moniker and you've got "Queen of Soul," and there's only one of them: Aretha Franklin, who's in a totally different league from Blige (and just about everyone else, to be honest). Granted, Blige has a soulful voice, but she never really breaks loose; she's also one of the countless contemporary singers (of both genders) who seems to think she needs a dozen notes when one would more than suffice. And the material? Blige has had her share of hits, like "You Remind Me," "Real Love," and "Family Affair," and there's the occasional reminder of, say, Stevie Wonder, or even Steely Dan, but there's virtually nothing here in the way of a memorable melody. Still, the fans love Mary J. Blige, as do Sting, Elton John, and the others who've worked with her, making this 22-song 2004 Los Angeles Amphitheatre concert—presented in DTS and Dolby Digital 5.1 sound (with DVD extras including behind-the-scenes footage)—a strong optional purchase. Aud: P. (S. Graham)

The Marshall Tucker Band: Live from the Garden State 1981 ★★★

(1981) 131 min. DVD: \$19.98. Shout! Factory (avail. from most distributors). Color cover. ISBN: 0-7839-2925-5.



The Marshall Tucker Band, hailing from Spartanburg, South Carolina, was a part of the Southern fusion music scene in the 1970s, along with the Allman Brothers, Wet Willie, and others. Like the Allmans, the Tucker Band (there actually was no member of the group named Marshall Tucker) combined rock, country blues, jazz, and long boogie jams that added up to a muscular yet nimble sound, topped by Doug Gray's soulful and pop-friendly (if occasionally excessive) vocals. This DVD captures a 1981 MTV concert the band performed not long after founding member Tommy Caldwell perished in a car crash. Singer Gray and fellow survivors carry on with an enjoyable 15-song set that includes "Take the Highway," with its martial beat and jazzy fife; the dreamy, sweet "Special Someone"; and stirring renditions of their radio hits "Can't You See" and "Heard It In a Love Song," all presented in Dolby Digital 5.1. DVD extras include the featurette on the band, "Which One Is Marshall Tucker?" Recommended. Aud: P. (T. Keogh)

Melissa Etheridge: Lucky Live ★★★

(2004) 81 min. DVD: \$14.98. Universal Music (avail. from most distributors). Color cover.



Rocker Melissa Etheridge's latest album *Lucky* follows on the heels of her 2001 *Skin* (a painful soul-searching record written in the wake of Etheridge's highly publicized breakup with Julie Cypher after a 12-year relationship; as *Entertainment Tonight* fans no doubt remember, Cypher bore two children from artificial insemination courtesy of David Crosby). *Lucky* is a brighter, bouncier effort, and while none of the 14 songs (the full 13 from the new release, and one unrecorded number) performed in this 2004 NYC concert quite match the fire of 1993's *Yes I Am* (with the hits "I'm the Only One" and "Come to My Window"), Etheridge's fine balance of straight-ahead rockers and power ballads makes for solid listening. Also released as a CD/DVD compilation (\$29.98), the 81-minute concert (even though it contains no older material at all) offers good value, with Etheridge ably backed by guitarist Philip Sayce and drummer Kenny Aronoff on standouts that include the hit "Breathe," the lovely ballad "Will You Still Love Me," the soaring anthem "This Moment," and the 9/11-themed "Tuesday Morning" (a moving tribute to gay passenger Mark Bingham, an American hero who was part of the "Let's roll" revolt against