

large reflective screen to the rear of the stage that not only allows images to be projected but also offers the illusion of expanded space in crowd scenes while still preserving intimacy for solos and duets. The leads—Susan Graham (Dido), Gregory Kunde (Aeneas), and Anna Caterina Antonacci (Cassandra)—are uniformly superb, with the supporting roles equally well sung, and the prominent chorus simply wonderful. Video director Peter Maniura has done the performance proud with his unfussy, careful camerawork, and the sound—with DTS 5.1 and LCPM stereo options—is thrillingly real. Some might find the modern costumes off-putting, and others may object to Gardiner's decision to use a truncated version of an earlier, quieter conclusion to the last scene which omits Dido's dying recognition of Rome's coming glory—but those are minor complaints about a staggeringly fine achievement, not only the best *Les Troyens* on DVD but one of the best of all opera DVDs, period. DVD extras include an hour-long documentary in which the conductor, director, and singers discuss the work. Highly recommended. **Editor's Choice.** Aud: C, P. (F. Swietek)

Lynn Anderson: Live at the Renaissance Center

★★★

(2004) 61 min. DVD: \$14.95. Music Video Distributors (avail. from most distributors). Color cover.



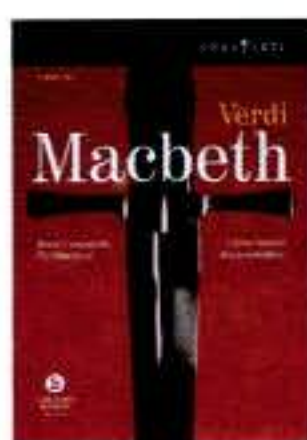
I beg your pardon? Lynn Anderson's still around? In this 2004 concert taped at Dickson, Tennessee's Renaissance Center, the 58-year-old Anderson and a crack band tear through a parade of country, bluegrass, and pop hits—16 in an hour. For the most part, these are other people's hits—Anderson saves her own 1971 breakout tune, Joe South's "Rose Garden," for later in the set—including everything from The Drifters' "Under the Boardwalk" to Ian & Sylvia's "Someday Soon" (a megahit for Judy Collins) and even The Carpenters' "Top of the World." Her voice, never really a one-of-a-kind instrument to begin with, hasn't changed much, but Anderson lacks the personality or charisma to really carry this concert—presented in Dolby Digital stereo—even with a sympathetic audience and a solid band headed by pianist Buddy Skipper and multi-instrumentalist Robin Ruddy (showcased on the instrumental "Foggy Mountain Breakdown" and the crowd-pleasing closer, "Rocky Top"). Anderson made a whole career out of "Rose Garden," but that one song does not a DVD make. Aud: P. (M. Moore)

Macbeth ★★★

(2004) 2 discs. 164 min. In Italian w/English subtitles. DVD: \$39.99 (booklet included). BBC Opus Arte (dist. by Naxos of America). Color cover.

The first of Giuseppe Verdi's Shakespeare-

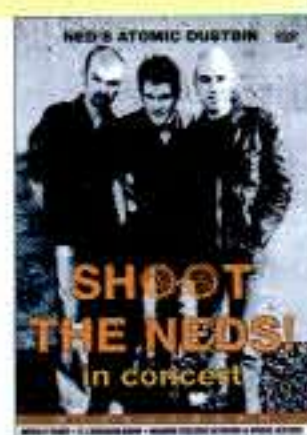
based operas, *Macbeth* is the work of a young man—the composer was still in his early 30s when it premiered in 1847—but Verdi revised it for Paris 18 years later, and it's this version that serves as the basis for this staging by Phyllida Lloyd, which debuted at Covent Garden in 2002 and is seen here in a 2004 production at the Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona. The opera itself is one of the strongest of Verdi's pre-*Rigoletto* scores, mixing exceptionally powerful arias with characteristically rousing choruses, and Lloyd's is an imaginative rendition, employing darkness and a rather constricting wood-paneled enclosure, featuring a rotating cage within, to give the action a sense of almost claustrophobic fatalism. Admittedly, the gloomy ambience sometimes plays havoc with the images, which are occasionally dim, but the sound (with DTS and LCPM stereo options) is marvelous throughout. Musically the performance is a strong one, with Carlos Álvarez exhibiting a firm, rich baritone in the title role and Maria Guleghina showing great fire and spirit, if not always flawless control, as Lady Macbeth. Bruno Campanella's conducting may not be the last word in elegance, and the orchestra isn't always ideally crisp, but generally they provide the singers with solid support. DVD extras are limited to a brief "illustrated synopsis" and a cast photo gallery. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (F. Swietek)



Ned's Atomic Dustbin: Shoot the Neds! in Concert

★★★1/2

(2002) 119 min. DVD: \$19.95. Music Video Distributors (avail. from most distributors). Color cover.



This 20-song set, recorded in June 2002 at JB's in Dudley, England featuring the reformed Ned's Atomic Dustbin, isn't the cleanest-sounding concert DVD ever (thanks to having two pounding bass guitars in the lineup), but this show (with original Neds Jonn Penney, Alex Griffin, and Dan Warton, and new guys Martin Warlow and Andy King) is nevertheless a rollicking affair. Without any fancy effects, director Dave Meehan and his five cameras present a faithful—and really, really fun—recording of the Neds' performance at the same club where they played their first proper gig back in 1987, replete with stage divers and crowd surfers. Griffin actually uses his Rickenbacker as a sort of "rhythm bass," taking advantage of the unique instrument's lovely treble voice, while King lumbers along in the normal bass register. Warlow's lead excursions are few and far between, and Penney's vocals more of a controlled shout, so the music here remains a constant, thumping assault—but that's exactly what anyone in a Neds crowd wants.

The highlight is a rousing take on "Kill Your Television," but the songs are pretty much uniformly enjoyable—if you don't mind that certain sameness that comes from all that bass. Presented in Dolby Digital 5.1, extra features include a thoughtful, charming interview with Penney, Griffin, and Warton. An atmospheric concert film offering a decent introduction to the band's music, this is highly recommended for larger music collections. Aud: P. (M. Moore)

Olivia Newton-John: Video Gold I

★★1/2
(2005) 62 min. DVD: \$14.98. Universal Music & Video (avail. from most distributors). Color cover.



The bulk of the material on this 16-cut anthology comes from pre-MTV music videos spun from Olivia Newton-John's 1979 *Totally Hot* and 1981 *Physical* albums, both very successful with the Australian singer's fans. Videos for "Deeper Than the Night" and "A Little More Love" capture Newton-John's performances in the studio, while "Totally Hot" is more playful, finding the attractive singer turning heads while walking down the street. *Physical* yielded quite a few videos, as it turns out, and they're all here, including a cute production inspired by the title track, in which Newton-John plays an aerobics devotee cajoling a lot of chubby men in a sweaty workout. Of course, a lot of this stuff looks pretty creaky now and sometimes ill-advised, such as a late-in-the-game video for the *Grease* hit "Hopelessly Devoted to You," which Newton-John attempts to retool as a grownup torch song instead of a dreamy schoolgirl plaint. Presented in Dolby Digital stereo, DVD extras here include three live performances from *Olivia in Concert*. A strong optional purchase. [Note: *Olivia Newton-John: Video Gold II* is also newly available.] Aud: P. (T. Keogh)

Ozzy Osbourne's Ozzfest: 10th Anniversary

★★1/2
(2005) 150 min. DVD: \$19.98 (CD included). Clear Channel Entertainment (avail. from most distributors). Color cover. ISBN: 0-9768342-9-4.



Anthrax. Arch Enemy. In Flames. It Dies Today. Bury Your Dead. Sounds like a terrorist manifesto, and if Iron Maiden was on the list, we'd have the Bush administration's preferred method of dealing with terror suspects, too. But no, these are just some of the bands who appeared in 2005 at Ozzfest, the heavy metal noise-a-thon celebrating its 10th anniversary—captured on this 30-song compilation recorded in Dorington, England and Camden, NJ. Established as a head-banging alternative to all the other traveling festivals, Ozzfest "was an experiment that went crazy," says Ozzy Osbourne