

Mighty Rearranger CD that's also performed in this 2005 PBS-aided *Soundstage* concert, Robert Plant proclaims his refusal to live off past glories: "My peers may flirt with cabaret, some fake the rebel yell/Me—I'm moving up to higher ground, I must escape this hell." Considering that five of the 11 songs performed here (including two bonus numbers) originated with Plant's former group Led Zeppelin, those lyrics come off as a mite disingenuous. But Plant and his young, versatile group (including members of Portishead, Massive Attack, and other Brit bands) deliver genuinely thrilling versions of "Black Dog," "Gallows Pole," and "Four Sticks," and surely deserve some kind of medal for breathing new life into "Whole Lotta Love." Overall, the song textures are fairly exotic, featuring a percussion-heavy bent reflecting Plant's explorations of North African and Middle Eastern styles (previously visited on the Plant-Jimmy Page collaboration *No Quarter*), with less reliance on melody and harmony and more on rhythm and feeling, especially in newer material like "The Enchanter" and "Tin Pan Valley," while the commingling of lowdown blues grooves and the subtle atmospheric use of electronics brings a different sound to the Zep tunes. Plant is a low-key showman these days, a far cry from the blond-maned rock king who once fronted the biggest band of the '70s (those screeching high notes are a distant memory as well), but this high-definition filmed, Dolby Digital 5.1 recorded concert is an admirable testament to the singer's determination to stay in the game. Recommended. Aud: P. (S. Graham)



Stop the War Coalition: Benefit Concert ★★★1/2
(2005) 130 min. DVD: \$19.95. Music Video Distributors (avail. from most distributors).

The music and the message are both powerful in this November 2005 concert, recorded in London. Both come courtesy of the Stop the War Coalition, a UK group that has campaigned since 9/11 against the various actions that comprise the so-called war on terrorism. Only about 10 minutes of the program are devoted specifically to speechifying, but that's plenty—especially for any American viewer who may still wonder why the rest of the world pretty much hates us (a partial answer can be found in musician Brian Eno's remark that the only reason for the presence of an estimated 8,000 British troops in the Middle East is so the Bush administration can claim that the invasion and occupation of Iraq is a "coalition" effort). Yet those uninterested in polemics will also find some extraordinary music here, especially after short sets



by singer Imogen Heap and composer-DJ Nitin Sawhney (who's joined by Eno), when the Rachid Taha Band takes the stage. The Algerian-born, French-raised Taha's music combines Eastern tonalities and Western sensibilities, as the singer's Arabic vocals and exotic instruments like the oud meld with electric guitars, Bo Diddley beats, and Eno's trademark "soundscapes" in one of the most rocking, exuberant sets this reviewer has ever seen—and the energy level (high throughout) goes through the roof when former Clash guitarist Mick Jones joins the band onstage for five tunes, including "Rock the Casbah" (referred to here as "Rock El Casbah"). While the visuals are pretty standard (with lots of kinetic editing), the Dolby Digital 5.1 sound is great. Highly recommended for warmongers and pacifists alike. Aud: P. (S. Graham)

The Style Council: Live at Full House Rock Show

★★★1/2
(1987) 37 min. DVD: \$16.95. Music Video Distributors (avail. from most distributors).



After the breakup of the hugely influential British punk group The Jam in 1982, lead vocalist/guitarist Paul Weller teamed up with keyboardist Mick Talbot to form the Style Council in order to pursue a more R&B poppingtoned sound, releasing their first full-length album *Café Bleu* in 1984. In this brief eight-song set, performed before a studio audience in Hannover, Germany circa 1987, the lads are backed by solid percussion, flute, and sax on numbers drawn primarily from 1985's *Internationalists* (including the title track—erroneously shown onscreen as "International List"—"Homebreakers," and the hit "Shout to the Top!") and 1987's *Cost of Loving* ("Heaven's Above" and "Walking the Night"), as well as the medium hits "With Everything to Lose" and "Money Go Round." Still, what's missing here are nearly all of the band's major hits, including "My Ever Changing Moods" and "Walls Come Tumbling Down." On the other hand, the virtual absence of any other Style Council concerts on DVD makes this energetic little half-hour-plus of heartfelt white soul, presented in Dolby Digital 5.1 and stereo, worth considering. DVD extras include a brief interview with show host Alan Bangs. A strong optional purchase. Aud: P. (R. Pitman)

Sue Foley: Live in Europe ★★★1/2

(2005) 136 min. DVD: \$19.95. Music Video Distributors (avail. from most distributors).

Canadian-born, Austin, TX-trained Sue Foley has established herself as one of the stars of the contemporary blues scene—as a player, singer, and songwriter. *Sue Foley: Live in Europe* compiles two concerts: a 13-song set recorded at The Underground in Koln, Germany in 2005, and a bonus eight-song

offering from a show in Amsterdam (which includes versions of four of the Koln songs) during the same European tour. The only cause for lament is that Foley doesn't play any acoustic guitar, strictly sticking with her pink paisley Telecaster, but she's riveting nonetheless, whether picking out up-tempo country stomps or grinding through several brilliant slow blues. Some of the Koln songs are instrumentals, including "The Snake," "Hooked on Love," and "Mediterranean Breakfast," while the rest feature Foley's high, warbly vocals, reminiscent of Michelle Shocked. By the Koln closer, the lowdown blues "Gone Blind" performed solo, viewers know that Foley is the real deal, and she's backed here by a crack band that includes keyboard whiz Graham Guest, drummer Tom Bonam, and bassist Michael Turenne. A great introduction to this underrated talent for the uninitiated (and sure to be welcomed by veteran fans), this is highly recommended. Aud: P. (M. Moore)



U2: Zoo TV—Live from Sydney ★★★★★

(1994) 118 min. DVD: \$19.98. Universal Music Group (avail. from most distributors).



Long coveted by music DVD aficionados, *U2: Zoo TV—Live from Sydney* is a *tour de force* performance filmed by legendary music video director David Mallet, capturing the Irish pop rock band on their multimedia Zoo TV tour in 1993 promoting the release of *Zooropa*. Backed by an array of video walls featuring a perpetual barrage of images (historical, industrial, advertising, TV talk shows, etc.) and rapid-fire battery of words and phrases ("everything you know is wrong," "watch more TV," etc.), U2 regaled the Sydney audience of 60,000 with a masterful 22-song set, with half of the songs drawn from 1991's experimental/dance-club inflected *Achtung Baby* (including "Zoo Station," "Even Better Than the Real Thing," "One," "Until the End of the World," and "Mysterious Ways") and the similarly-themed *Zooropa* ("Numb," "Lemon"). Interspersed throughout are a number of U2 staples, including "New Year's Day," "Where the Streets Have No Name," "With or Without You," and their powerhouse homage to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., "Pride (In the Name of Love)." Playing the persona of rock star nonpareil, Bono skips, slides, slinks, strolls, and struts all over the stage and along a runway into the crowd, ably backed by Edge's choppy guitar, Adam Clayton's commanding bass, and Larry Mullen, Jr.'s steady drums. After a solid 90-minute set, the band returned to take the stage for a brilliantly campy encore in which Bono, sporting devil horns, opened with the funky