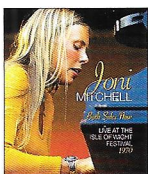


Joni Mitchell: Both Sides Now—Live at the Isle of Wight Festival 1970

★★★★1/2

(2017) 132 min. DVD: \$17.99, Blu-ray: \$21.98. Eagle Rock Entertainment (avail. from most distributors).



Documentary filmmaker Murray Lerner died in 2017 at age 90. Just before passing, he readied this release capturing Joni Mitchell's troubled set at the disastrous Isle of Wight Festival in 1970—the third and last folk-and-rock music festival there, which drew more than a half-million fans to a multi-day concert extravaganza. By 1970, residents of the Isle of Wight were no longer tolerant of the annual hippie invasion on rented farmland, and local government set out to make the producers, artists, and audience feel uncomfortable and unwanted. The result was growing discord within the pop-up city that arrived to camp out and hear a remarkable slate of top musicians and singer-songwriters. Almost 30 years later, Lerner began drawing from his extensive footage of the 1970 festival, releasing several DVD and Blu-ray discs featuring the live sets of individual artists, including Jimi Hendrix, the Who, the Doors, the Moody Blues, and Leonard Cohen. In this 11-song set from Joni Mitchell, viewers will witness the tension, caught in the distraught looks on Mitchell's face and in her emotional plea to the audience to respect the performers (who had become convenient targets of the crowd's noisy wrath). But of course what truly shines is the music of Mitchell, who was then in the early years of her brand of enchanted, romantic, and sometimes confessional folk songs. Fans will appreciate this set, which includes some of her greatest hits: "Chelsea Morning," "Big Yellow Taxi," "Woodstock," and the titular classic. Viewers have the option of watching the concert itself, or with clips of Mitchell from 2003 commenting on what happened during her appearance. Presented in DTS 5.1, Dolby Digital 5.1 and stereo on DVD, and DTS-HD 5.1 and LPCM stereo on Blu-ray, this is highly recommended. (T. Keogh)

Le Comte Ory ★★★★★

(2015) 142 min. In French w/ English subtitles. DVD or Blu-ray: \$24.99. Naxos (avail. from most distributors).



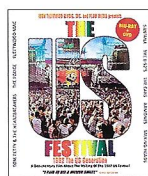
Rossini's penultimate opera, written a year before he abruptly retired at the age of 37, has never attained the popularity of his best-known works, but it offers a remarkable blend of sophistication, sensuality, bawdiness, and warmth. The title character is a womanizing nobleman disguised as a holy hermit in order to seduce Countess Adèle, who has sworn to be faithful to her husband, a long-absent Crusader. Ory's page Isolier is himself in love with the countess, and plans

to sneak into her castle disguised as a nun—a scheme the count adopts after his hermit imposture is exposed. The return of the Crusaders dashes the hopes of both, although in this 2015 production from the Malmö Opera the knights suddenly drop dead of their wounds upon arrival, leaving the countess free to take a new husband as the curtain falls. There are a few other oddities in Linda Mallik's staging, but for the most part her choices are witty, and the sets and costumes are eye-catching. Conductor Tobias Ringborg leads a scintillating reading of the score, and the vocalism is excellent, with Leonardo Ferrando's high tenor and gift for farce perfect for Count Ory, Erika Miklósa charming as Adèle, and Daniela Pini engaging in the trousers role of Isolier. Lars Arvidson exhibits a rather woolly tone as Ory's tutor, but apart from him the solo and choral work is expert. Overall, this is a first-rate version of a very enjoyable and too often overlooked example of Rossini at his bubbly best. Presented in PCM stereo, this is highly recommended. (F. Swietek)

The US Festival: 1982 The US Generation

★★★★

(2018) 96 min. Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$29.95. MVD Entertainment Group (avail. from most distributors).



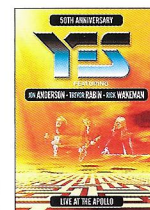
Glenn Aveni's documentary recounts the steps that Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak took to put together the US Festival, a three-day "Woodstock of the '80s." Woz remembers growing up on Americana music, but felt that major festivals never gave the form its due (although he also incorporated punk and new wave). Inexperienced in concert promotion, Woz hired people he trusted, gave them \$2 million, and formed Unuson, short for Unite Us in Song. As the Grateful Dead's Mickey Hart puts it, "He had the vision and the money." Unuson President Dr. Peter Ellis adds that Steve Jobs wasn't happy about it, but Woz had no interest in making US an Apple event. When he selected a San Bernardino location that lacked a natural amphitheater, Woz spent \$10 million to carve one out of a hill. He also hired veteran concert promoter Bill Graham, who clashed with the Unuson people, but proved invaluable. Marky Ramone (the Ramones), Mick Fleetwood (Fleetwood Mac), and other artists add to the commentary alongside full-length performances, including the B-52's with "Strobe Light" and Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers playing "Refugee," as well as songs by The Cars, The Police, and Santana. Despite the oppressive heat, staffers kept concertgoers hydrated with water bottles and sprinklers. Woz hoped for a peaceful weekend, and that appears to be how things played out. If Woz lost several million dollars, he expresses no regrets in Aveni's upbeat film. Presented in Dolby Digital stereo, extras include audio commentary by Aveni,

and interview outtakes. Recommended. (K. Fennessy)

Yes: Live at the Apollo

★★★★

(2017) 120 min. DVD: \$15.98, Blu-ray: \$21.98. Eagle Rock Entertainment (avail. from most distributors).



The schizophrenic nature of this 50th anniversary concert (one of two different Yes lineups launching celebratory tours) filmed live at England's 02 Apollo Manchester theatre is reflected in the 12-song split: six hail from the classic Yes era (1969-78) and six from the '80s Yes period (specifically 1983-91), the latter dominated by songwriter/guitarist Trevor Rabin. *Yes: Live at the Apollo* features only two members from the classic Yes days: still-angelic-voiced lead singer Jon Anderson and literally-surrounded-by-keyboards Rick Wakeman (guitarist Steve Howe and drummer Alan White play for the other Yes, original drummer Bill Bruford is retired, and bass legend Chris Squire passed away in 2015). The pair are joined by Rabin, Lee Pomeroy on bass, and Louis Molino III on drums for a set that seesaws back and forth between Yes's early prog rock classics ("I've Seen All Good People," "And You & I," "Long Distance Runaround," "Heart of the Sunrise") and '80s pop ("Hold On," "Rhythm of Love," "Changes"), closing appropriately with the biggest hits from the two respective periods of Yes: "Roundabout" and "Owner of a Lonely Heart." Musically, the band sounds very good (although classic Yes fans will wince at Rabin's choppy guitar—channeling U2's Edge—on "Long Distance Runaround"), led by Anderson's amazingly strong voice, Wakeman's nimble fingers, and Rabin's blistering fretwork. Presented in DTS 5.1, Dolby Digital 5.1 and stereo on DVD, and DTS-HD 5.1 and LPCM stereo on Blu-ray, this is recommended. (R. Pitman)

Rock On

Following up on their *Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in Concert (VL-7/18)*, which compiled the 2014-17 Rock & Roll Hall of Fame induction ceremonies in their entirety, Time Life has released *Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in Concert: Encore* (DVD: 4 discs, \$34.99; Blu-ray: 2 discs, \$39.99), featuring the 2010-13 ceremonies. Inductee performers include Genesis, The Stooges, ABBA, Dr. John, Darlene Love, Alice Cooper, Tom Waits, Leon Russell, Freddie King, Donovan, Beastie Boys, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Randy Newman, Albert King, Heart, Quincy Jones, Public Enemy, and Rush.

