

the popular cover "True Colors," closing with a fun trio of tunes that feature some entertaining stage business: Paul Simon's "Wear My Hat" (with Collins donning a colorful succession of wacky hats), "Easy Lover" (a love triangle played out with two of the backup singers), and "Sussudio" (with Collins interacting with the crowd, urging individuals to "say the word"). Returning with a brief encore, Collins cleverly introduces the band and sends each member home during the finale "Take Me Home." As a bonus, the disc also features a 13-song mostly instrumental 1996 performance by the Phil Collins Big Band—conducted by Quincy Jones—with guest stars including David Sanborn (playing blistering sax on "In the Air Tonight") and Tony Bennett (singing "There'll Be Some Changes Made"). Presented in DTS 5.1, Dolby Digital 5.1 and stereo on DVD, and DTS-HD 5.1, Dolby Digital 5.1, and LPCM stereo on Blu-ray, this is recommended with one caveat: for better or worse, viewers will be stuck with a Collins mixtape playing in their heads for weeks after watching. (R. Pitman)

Public Image Limited: Live at Rockpalast 1983

★★★
(1983) 72 min. DVD: \$19.95.
Music Video Distributors (avail.
from most distributors).



Recorded for the German television show *Rockpalast* on Halloween in 1983, this Public Image Limited concert features a relatively staid first half followed by a raucous, crowd-pleasing second half. As the band—formed by vocalist John Lydon (aka Johnny Rotten) in 1978 after the dissolution of the Sex Pistols—powers through "Public Image," "Annalisa," "Religion," "Memories," "Flowers of Romance," "Solitaire," and "Chant," the keyboard player chain-smokes, the guitarist chews gum, the bass player looks out of place in his pressed pants and tidy vest, and the drummer hunkers low while Lydon paces the stage, telling the crowd, "I'm bored and I'm going home." Right when this begins to sound like a good idea, the band launches into the Sex Pistols' "Anarchy in the U.K.," quickly putting the audience in the palm of their hand (never underestimate the power of a hit single). "(This Is Not a) Love Song" shows off the band's strange punk/disco hybridization, and Lydon jumps into the crowd for "Under the House," urging them to sing along while everyone on stage plays drums. "Bad Life" and a second take on "Public Image" round things out, by which time both the musicians and fans alike are grinning and drenched in sweat. Presented in PCM stereo, DVD extras include rehearsal footage and a brief interview of Lydon by *Rockpalast* host Alan Bangs. Recommended. (H. Seggel)

Queen: Days of Our Lives

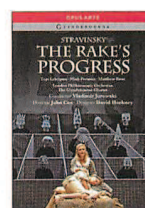
★★★1/2
(2011) 221 min. DVD: \$14.98,
Blu-ray: \$19.98. Eagle Rock
Entertainment (avail. from
most distributors).



This two-part BBC documentary takes an oral history approach to the story of Queen, drawing on interviews both old and new. Guitarist Brian May starts things off by talking about Smile, the band he formed with drummer Roger Taylor. When their vocalist left, Freddie Mercury stepped in, and Queen was born. Bass player John Deacon, who doesn't participate in the present-day commentary, joined two years later, but their big breakthrough wouldn't arrive until 1974's *Sheer Heart Attack*. Unfortunately, Queen was mired in debt due to a bad record deal, but the combination of new manager John Reid and the hit album *A Night at the Opera* (which included "Bohemian Rhapsody") reversed their fortunes. In part because Reid was openly gay, Mercury actually came out to him before he did with his band mates. Even though critics remained skeptical and punk became the new rock darling, Queen's fame increased during the 1970s with concerts in Hyde Park and Madison Square Garden, but there were disagreements along the way. Taylor wasn't thrilled with the disco leanings of "Another One Bites the Dust," which remained on the Hot 100 for months, but it proved the group's flexibility and staying power. After "Under Pressure," their hit with David Bowie, it all started to go downhill due to a variety of excesses. As the band splintered, members released solo projects, but a performance at Live Aid helped to bring them together again. Mercury became HIV-positive sometime afterward, but worked until the end, and his colleagues here testify to his dedication. Bonus features include additional interviews and performances. Highly recommended. (K. Fennessy)

The Rake's Progress

★★★1/2
(2010) 140 min. DVD: \$29.99,
Blu-ray: \$39.99. Opus Arte
(dist. by Naxos of America).

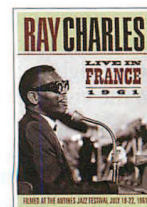


Igor Stravinsky's 1951 opera is set to a libretto—co-written by W.H. Auden, based on a famed series of 18th-century engravings by William Hogarth—that follows a wastrel who strikes it rich with demonic help but loses his wealth and ends up in a madhouse, even though he saves his soul by gambling with the devil. Written in a cool neoclassical style, *The Rake's Progress* is more admirable than lovable, but very enjoyable in this fine 2010 Glyndebourne Festival performance that revives the exquisite designs (modeled after Hogarth) that David Hockney fashioned in 1961 (later used for a 1975 Glyndebourne mounting). Vladimir

Jurowski leads the London Philharmonic in an ebullient yet refined reading of the score; Topi Lehtipuu looks the part of Tom Rakewell and sings beautifully; Miah Persson shines in the role of Anne Trulove, the local lass Tom unwisely abandons; and Matthew Rose cuts a darkly humorous figure as the Mephistophelean Nick Shadow. Only Elena Manistina, as Baba the Bearded Lady, whom Tom weds, falls a bit below the high vocal standard. Aiming more for the brain than the heart—but almost irresistible in a version this elegant—*The Rake's Progress* is presented in DTS 5.1 and Dolby Digital stereo on DVD, and DTS-HD 5.1 and LPCM stereo on Blu-ray. Extras include a behind-the-scenes featurette, an introduction to the opera, and a cast gallery. As a more traditional alternative to the Brussels mounting (VL-7/08)—which relocates the action to 1950s Las Vegas—this is highly recommended. (F. Swietek)

Ray Charles: Live in France 1961

★★★1/2
(1961) 111 min. DVD: \$14.98.
Eagle Rock Entertainment
(avail. from most distributors).



Unseen since it was first broadcast in France some 50 years ago, this extraordinary set of performances (26 in all, including bonus tracks) finds one of America's greatest artists at a creative and financial peak. When he embarked on his first-ever trip abroad for a series of concerts at the Antibes Jazz Festival, Ray Charles had recently signed a deal with the ABC-Paramount label that gave him 75% of all profits and ownership of his own master recordings (both utterly unprecedented at the time). But Charles had made his name in the previous decade with Atlantic Records, where he perfected the blend of jazz, R&B, gospel, blues, and other flavors that not only defined his sound but laid the groundwork for soul music in general, and that is the repertoire that he and his band (eight musicians, plus the four Raelettes on backing vocals) favor here. The three straight instrumentals that open the first set showcase the chops of all the players, especially saxophonists Hank Crawford (on alto) and David "Fathead" Newman (on tenor and flute). But it's when Ray sings the classics—"What'd I Say," "Let the Good Times Roll," "Hallelujah, I Love Her So," and "Georgia on My Mind"—that the audience comes alive. Some of the music sounds made by, if not for, junkies—Charles's heroin addiction was a serious problem in 1961 (he would be arrested on narcotics charges later the same year)—with tempos of several songs so impossibly slow (almost somnambulant) that it's a wonder the musicians aren't nodding out onstage. No matter, the raw power of the music is simply undeniable, presented here with digitally restored and remastered black-and-white video and mono audio. Highly recommended. (S. Graham)