

1986 to 1998, he signed over 70 acts, some of whom—like Helmet—would eventually move on to major labels. He also worked with artists, like Coop and Frank Kozik, who designed album covers and posters. Their influence on Hazelmeyer was so profound that he segued from music to art. His new career began in earnest after a bout with spinal meningitis in 2009. Afterward, he found printmaking therapeutic, and has since opened an art gallery. Both visually and aurally stimulating, *The Color of Noise* offers an engaging mix of “color” and “noise” capturing Hazelmeyer’s B-movie aesthetic. Presented in 5.1 surround sound and stereo, extras include an audio commentary, behind-the-scenes featurettes, a 1992 interview with Hazelmeyer, bonus song performances, a poster gallery, and a booklet. Recommended. (K. Fennessy)

### Der Freischütz ★★½

(2015) 149 min. In German w/English subtitles, DVD: 2 discs, \$39.99; Blu-ray: \$39.99. C Major/Unitel Classica (dist. by Naxos of America).



Carl Maria von Weber’s 1821 masterwork—a milestone in the development of German Romantic opera—tells a supernatural tale that focuses on Max, a huntsman who is so anxious to win the hand of Agathe in a shooting contest that he is persuaded by Kaspar, a man who has sold his soul to the devil, to do the same in return for seven magic bullets that will always find their targets. It would be difficult to imagine a more potent presentation of *Der Freischütz*—which boasts a succession of memorable arias and choruses—than this 2015 production from the Dresden Semperoper. Christian Thielemann coaxes extraordinary playing from the Staatskapelle Dresden, while the vocalism is top-notch, with Michael König (Max), Sara Jakubiak (Agathe) and Georg Zeppenfeld (Kaspar) all superb, and Christina Landshamer adding a touch of joviality as Agathe’s good-natured cousin Ännchen. Some may object to director Axel Köhler’s updating of the action from the 17th century to what appears to be post-WWII, but he certainly creates a striking tableau for the key setting of Wolf’s Glen, which features corpses hanging in the air, bathed in hellish red lighting. In all, this is a thoroughly gripping version of Weber’s opera, even though the visuals are sometimes a bit too dark (a deliberate effect of the lighting design). Presented in DTS 5.0 (DTS-HD 5.0 on the Blu-ray release) and PCM stereo, this is highly recommended. (F. Swietek)

### Die Fledermaus ★★½

(1990) 197 min. DVD: 2 discs, \$29.99; Blu-ray: \$24.99. Arthaus Musik (dist. by Naxos of America).

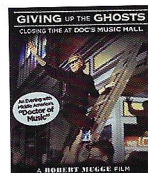
The big selling point of this December 31, 1990 performance—mounted at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden—of

Johann Strauss II’s most famous operetta (a complicated farce of infidelity and mistaken identities) is that it celebrated the career of Dame Joan Sutherland, who was retiring from the stage. Although Sutherland was not part of the regular cast, she and her colleagues Marilyn Horne and Luciano Pavarotti appeared in the traditional “gala scene” at Prince Orlofsky’s ball in Act 2, singing pieces by Cilea, Rossini, Saint-Saëns, and Verdi before Sutherland offered “Home Sweet Home” to expected cheers (also featured in a ballet interlude). Otherwise this staging, presented in an English translation that invites much mugging from the cast, is a rather broad affair, made all the more peculiar in that the Orlofsky role is taken by countertenor Jochen Kowalks rather than the traditional mezzo—although Sutherland’s husband Richard Bonyng’s conducting does bring a solid lilt to the familiar tunes. Viewers also must suffer a prolonged comic riff at the beginning of Act 3 by John Sessions as the jailer, which recalls the music hall as much as the operatic stage, and notes the presence of John Major, the newly-installed Prime Minister, in one of the venue’s boxes. Made for British TV, this *Die Fledermaus* (*The Bat*) exhibits the visual and sonic limitations one would expect of a quarter-century-plus-old TV production, but even though it will appeal more to aficionados of Sutherland than Strauss, it is a fine tribute to one of the 20th century’s greatest coloratura sopranos. Presented in PCM stereo, extras include bonus segments of Sutherland singing famous arias by Verdi, Donizetti, and Bellini excerpted from filmed Opera Australia productions. A strong optional purchase. (F. Swietek)



### Giving Up the Ghosts: Closing Time at Doc’s Music Hall ★★½

(2014) 80 min. Blu-ray: \$19.95. MVD Entertainment Group (avail. from most distributors).

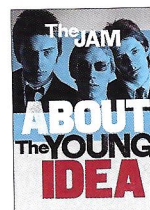


Respected music documentary filmmaker Robert Mugge’s latest captures the last night at an influential music venue: Doc’s Music Hall, which was originally a Muncie, IN, shoe store bought and reinvented in 1992 by keyboard player John Peterson, who oversaw the place for 20 years. In opening remarks, Peterson notes, “Yes, I’m a real doctor.” He keeps his board certification in Western medicine up to date, while incorporating Eastern systems such as Ayurvedic medicine into his practice. He opened Doc’s in order to revive the style of venues he played in as a musician during the 1960s. In between full-length song performances here, Peterson and his associates—including manager Mike Martin—recount the place’s history. Associate Paul Troxel mentions ghosts that some

observers claimed to have seen over the years, suggesting that they might be vaudevillians of yore looking for somewhere to hang out since the building did attract artistic types in the early-20th century. The musical portion of the program includes a 10-song set with the house band, featuring guitarist Douglas Hunt, saxophone player Phil Dunn, and drummer Kyle Ivy, who concentrate on rock and R&B covers such as the Doors’ “Light My Fire” and Lionel Ritchie’s “All Night Long.” Everyone except Hunt sings, but they are better musicians than singers, so the instrumental selections work best, like Peterson’s “Tribute to Monk.” While too narrowly focused to have wide appeal, this should still be considered a strong optional purchase. (K. Fennessy)

### The Jam: About the Young Idea ★★½

(2014) 2 discs. 90 min. DVD: \$19.98, Blu-ray: \$24.98. Eagle Rock Entertainment (avail. from most distributors).



In the late ‘70s, the working-class British punk trio The Jam had a somewhat different look and sound compared to contemporary acts like the Sex Pistols, drawing on R&B influences and sporting a ‘60s mod fashion style instead of safety pins and torn clothing. The band’s debut LP, 1977’s *In the City*, featured driving songs written by singer-guitarist Paul Weller, backed by bassist Bruce Foxton, and drummer Rick Buckler—including the titular youth anthem single that promised “we wanna say, we gonna tell ya/about the young idea.” Although only six years old when The Jam arrived on the music scene, Martin Freeman (*Sherlock*, *The Hobbit*) became a lifelong fan (“I know every lick of those records.”) Freeman is one of several aficionados singing the band’s praises in Bob Smeaton’s documentary profile, which presents a relatively anodyne and controversy-free chronological portrait tracing the rise and rise of the group (in Britain, that is; The Jam’s political songs never caught fire in America) up through the release of their sixth and final LP, 1982’s *The Gift*. Shortly thereafter, Weller—at the ripe old age of 23—walked away from it all (forming the Style Council two years later, and continuing to have a critically-acclaimed solo career to this day). Weller, Foxton, and Buckler are all on hand to visit key locations in the band’s history while also offering reminiscences—although never onscreen together. In fact, “The Bitterest Pill”—the title of a late single—of their breakup is essentially glossed over here (Foxton reputedly did not speak to Weller for 25 years, but he did appear on a 2010 Weller solo album). While the love and enthusiasm for the group is wonderful to hear (full disclosure: The Jam rank as one of my all-time favorite bands), the narrative here is ultimately a bit thin—no redemptive