

is...um...a movie, which means that we are treated to a tedious round-up-the-band prologue and four individual band member fantasy sequences sprinkled throughout the concert (god-awful stuff, with the exception of Bonham's straightforward montage of fun stuff he liked to do). In addition to the four bonus songs, other DVD extras include an archival BBC interview with Plant and manager Peter Grant, featurettes on a 1973 Tampa concert and a New York hotel robbery (in which the band lost about \$200,000), and an audio profile by cub *Rolling Stone* reporter Cameron Crowe, who would go on to write and direct the partially-Led Zep-inspired *Almost Famous*. Looking pristine and sounding exquisite, this landmark rock concert film is highly recommended. Aud: C, P. (R. Pitman)

### Spike Jones: The Legend

★★★

(2007) 3 discs. 165 min. DVD: \$49.98. Infinity Entertainment (avail. from most distributors).



Spike Jones and his City Slickers brought their unique brand of musical madness to America during the 1940s and '50s, touring the country with their "Musical Depreciation Revue," while also producing dozens of records, many of them parodies of well-known pop tunes. This boxed set collects four hours of their early '50s TV specials, two from *The Colgate Comedy Hour* and a pair from *All Star Revue*, that effectively capture the wacky joy of the band's raucous stage performances on hits such as "All I Want for Christmas Is My Two Front Teeth," "Cocktails for Two," and "Laura." Broadcast live, these shows featured plenty of bloopers, but that just reinforces the sense of spontaneity and adds to the charm (the programs also include the original commercials—many with Jones and his band—title cards, and network signoffs). Judged against today's high-definition-shot TV shows, the image quality isn't great—in fact, it's downright primitive—but that hardly matters once Spike and his boys get revved up in these winsome specials that also feature vocalist Helen Grayco (Mrs. Spike Jones), and guest appearances by Liberace, Jim Backus, and (as a host) Mike Wallace. A third disc of bonus material includes a "Person to Person" interview with Spike and his family at their Beverly Hills home, an appearance by Spike as "Leonard Burnside" on *The Ed Sullivan Show*, and an interview with "Weird Al" Yankovic, who was clearly inspired by Jones. Finally, the set boasts a bonus audio CD with two NBC pilot radio shows featuring Spike and the band from 1945. Recommended. Aud: P. (E. Hulse)

### Stranger: Bernie Worrell on Earth

★★★1/2

(2007) 105 min. DVD: \$19.95. Music Video Distributors (avail. from most distributors).

While little known outside the music world,

keyboardist Bernie Worrell, now 63, is revered by musicians, who compare him to the likes of Beethoven, Ellington, Charlie Parker, and Hendrix. Outlandish? Perhaps, but it's undeniable that as a member of Parliament-Funkadelic in the 1970s and Talking Heads in the '80s, Worrell played music on the Moog synthesizer, clavinet, celeste, and other instruments that added both a hefty dose of funk and a highly original voice ("the sound of the universe," as one interviewee puts it) to those groups' recordings, as well as to his own solo work. What Worrell has rarely been, however, is a commercial success, partially due to his own recalcitrance, as well as exploitation that resulted in losing his claim to publishing royalties from P-Funk classics like "Mothership Connection" and "Flash Light." Talking Heads David Byrne, Tina Weymouth, and Chris Frantz are on hand to sing Worrell's praises, as are P-Funkmeister George Clinton, Mos Def, members of Living Colour, and others, but—unfortunately—Worrell himself is not interviewed, although he appears regularly in file footage and more recent clips. DVD extras include 45 minutes of bonus interview clips, as well as 20 minutes of studio performances (featuring a very cool groove with guitarist Warren Haynes—of Gov't Mule and the Allman Brothers fame—Living Colour drummer Will Calhoun, and bassist Brett Bass). A strong optional purchase. Aud: P. (S. Graham)



### Styx—Caught in the Act: Live & More

★★★1/2  
(1984) 87 min. DVD: \$14.98. Universal Music Group (avail. from most distributors).

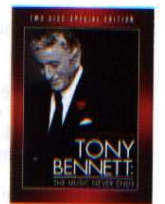


Originally released on VHS in 1984, and now presented on DVD in Dolby Digital 5.1 and stereo, *Styx—Caught in the Act—Live & More* is a visual companion to the band's 1984 concert LP *Caught in the Act*. Filmed April 9-10, 1983 at the Saenger Theatre in New Orleans (during Styx's *Kilroy Was Here* tour), the 14-song concert is mainly noteworthy for capturing the band on the verge of breaking up. At the time, singer/keyboardist Dennis DeYoung was pushing for more elaborate staging and showmanship, while singer/guitarists James "J.Y." Young and Tommy Shaw favored a return to their blues-rock roots. So, while the concert itself is polished and professional (Styx always put on an excellent show, ever faithful to their studio recordings), it's obvious in retrospect that DeYoung's flashy influence was closer to Las Vegas and Barry Manilow than to the popular rock that made Styx famous in the mid-to-late '70s. Not surprisingly, this results in a schizophrenic performance that begins with a campy short film about battling the

forces of censorship (a little ironic, given the band's clean-cut music) before launching into "Mr. Roboto," the cheesy DeYoung-penned hit that signaled the beginning of the end. Things improve significantly when Shaw and Young demonstrate their still-impressive skills, and major hits like "Come Sail Away" and "Blue Collar Man" are still quite enjoyable, but too many gems are missing here (including "Lady," "Crystal Ball," "Fooling Yourself," "The Grand Illusion," and "Babe"). DVD extras include 12 music videos that illustrate the band's gradual changes in style and sound from its peak in 1977 to its inevitable dissolution in 1984. Optional. Aud: P. (J. Shannon)

### Tony Bennett: The Music Never Ends

★★★  
(2007) 2 discs. 123 min. DVD: \$24.98. Warner Home Video (avail. from most distributors). Closed captioned. ISBN: 1-4198-6259-6.



Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, and Sammy Davis, Jr. all had careers on film, in Vegas, and in the tabloids. But not Tony Bennett: still going strong at the age of 81, Bennett is simply—as one of the interviewees in this fine documentary notes—"a citizen of music." Born Anthony Benedetto in 1926, this son of Italian immigrants grew up during the Depression, fought in World War II, and hit the big time in the 1950s after being signed to Columbia Records by Mitch Miller. Like many others, his star faded in the '60s as rock music came to the fore; yet Bennett, with the help of his manager son Danny, staged a remarkable revival that earned him many new (and young) fans and continues today (witness 2006's *An American Classic*, an album of duets with everyone from Paul McCartney and Sting to Christina Aguilera and the Dixie Chicks). Bennett has plenty of big name fans: Clint Eastwood co-produced this documentary, while Anthony Hopkins narrates, and Harry Belafonte, Mel Brooks, Alec Baldwin, and Martin Scorsese all weigh in with tributes. But it's the song selection that provides the high points: "That Old Devil Moon," "In a Mellow Tone," "Blue Velvet," "I Left My Heart in San Francisco," and many more are seen and heard, with TV and concert clips ranging from 1953 ("Boulevard of Broken Dreams") and 1955 (Hank Williams' "Cold Cold Heart," performed at the Grand Ole Opry) to 2005 (Bennett's concert at the Monterey Jazz Festival is included as a bonus on the second disc). Best of all are several medleys combining versions of the same song from different eras, including two that mix Bennett's renditions of "I Got Rhythm" and "They Can't Take That Away From Me" with those of Gene Kelly and Fred Astaire, respectively. DVD extras on the main disc include a conversation with Bennett and Eastwood. Recommended. Aud: P. (S. Graham)