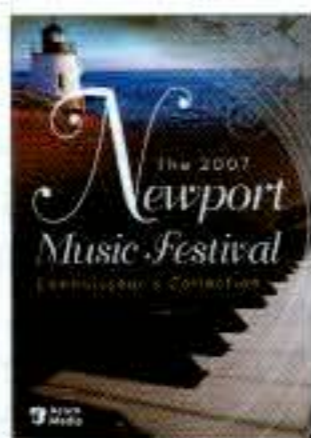


**The 2007 Newport Music Festival: Connoisseur's Collection** ★★1/2

(2007) 10 discs, 900 min. DVD: \$124.99. Acorn Media (avail. from most distributors).



Although the annual jazz and folk music festivals held in Newport, RI may be better known, this 10-disc boxed set celebrates their classical counterpart (founded in 1969), which showcases solo and chamber recitals. The higgly-piggly arrangement incorporates a piano program by a single artist, an assortment of pieces for string quartet, and diverse instrumental combinations, with the repertoire ranging from a complete performance of Bach's two- and three-part *Inventions*, stylishly played by Craig Shepard, to a transcription of Tchaikovsky's *1812 Overture*, performed by organist Hector Olivera (a stunt, but an audience-pleasing one). Viewers will hear several selections by Chopin, Schumann, Liszt, Mozart, and Schubert, but also pieces by such lesser lights as Hummel and Litolff. The festival's penchant for showcasing up-and-coming talent is evident here, and while the live performances are hardly note-perfect, nearly all are competent (the young artists may not boast deep interpretive insight, but they are technically proficient). Presented in Dolby Digital 5.1, DVD extras include commentary clips on the music and performers by Mark Malkovich, director of the festival since 1975, as well as several hours worth of bonus performances. Unfortunately, the set presents a smorgasbord of music without any unifying theme, and as such it seems more of a souvenir for attendees than a coherent musical offering. Optional. Aud: C, P. (F. Swietek)

**Ballroom Bootcamp**

★★1/2  
(2005) 211 min. DVD: \$14.95. Genius Products (avail. from most distributors). ISBN: 1-5944-5051-X.



TLC's *Ballroom Bootcamp*, which aired for a single season in 2005, featured amateurs learning how to dance like professionals. Over the course of six weeks, instructors Gocha, Christian, and Susannah taught Southern California-based recruits from both genders and all walks of life how to cha cha, rumba, tango, waltz, and jive ("a fast and fun swing dance"). This DVD features five of the 10 original episodes, focusing on one style per program, as contestants practice their steps, learn to dress appropriately (heels, sparkles, and makeup for everyone), join up with a partner (including Gocha's wife, Shorena), and compete against each other at Boston's Yankee Classic or Sarasota's Florida State DanceSport Championships. Aside from

the primary participants, who include extravagant single mom Lisa Marie, ex-athlete Erdolo, and forensic scientist Tammy, the show features interviews with family and friends in a format similar to *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*, but with less emphasis on wisecracks. A barebones release, *Ballroom Bootcamp* offers a more down-to-earth alternative to celeb-studded network competitions, such as *Dancing with the Stars* and *So You Think You Can Dance*, but for that very reason it's also less likely to appeal to most viewers. Optional. Aud: P. (K. Fennessy)

**Buddy Miles: Changes**

★★★  
(2006) 110 min. DVD: \$19.95. Music Video Distributors (avail. from most distributors).



Rock/funk drummer Buddy Miles (who passed away earlier this year) enjoyed a successful solo career, in addition to appearing on over 70 albums with Jimi Hendrix, Stevie Wonder, David Bowie, Carlos Santana, and others. Although the DVD cover here echoes Buddy Miles' classic 1971 album *Them Changes*, this release actually compiles two 1990s concerts. The vocalist/drummer performs the first 12-song set in Geneva, Switzerland with his band MST in 1995 at the New Morning Rock Heroes Festival. Miles and his dreadlocked mates fry up a funk-metal hybrid that recalls Living Colour in this 77-minute set (presented in Dolby Digital 5.1) that includes a mix of originals (such as "Life Is What You Make It") and cover songs (such as Otis Redding's "Knock on Wood" and the Beatles' "Come Together"), concluding with a trio of Hendrix tunes: "Purple Haze," "Voodoo Child," and "Hey Joe." The second date stems from Paris 1996, opening with Miles on guitar accompanied by a five-piece band, and offers only two numbers, but they're epic in length: Albert King's "Born Under a Bad Sign" (19:28) and the Impressions' "For Your Precious Love" (13:22), recorded in stereo. Describing his physique as "plenty big," Miles remains seated for both sets, but shreds and emotes with gusto. DVD extras include the half-hour 2004 documentary "After the Experience: A Buddy Miles Self-Portrait," in which Miles talks about his career, as well as a text bio and discography. Recommended. Aud: P. (K. Fennessy)

**Burn the Floor: Floor Play** ★★★

(2008) 103 min. DVD: \$19.99. Kultur International Films. ISBN: 978-0-7697-8727-5.

A breathtaking blend of samba, salsa, waltz, tango, swing, and jive music that attracted international attention a decade ago with an excerpt performance at Elton John's spectacular 50th birthday celebration, *Burn the Floor* has been a wildly popular stage show ever since, selling more than three

million tickets in over 30 countries. Filmed at Australia's Canberra Theatre, this dazzling performance demonstrates the truth of producer/director/choreographer Jason Gilkison's contention: namely, that ballroom dancing can be an incredibly passionate, even sexy experience. This new production—subtitled "Floor Play"—features *Burn the Floor*'s award-winning troupe of 20 international performers, including dancers from the hit TV shows *Dancing with the Stars* and *So You Think You Can Dance*, in a steamy, provocative display of terpsichorean talent sure to appeal to fans of *Riverdance*. Spectacular routines revolving around familiar tunes (including "You Make Me Feel Like Dancing," "Sing Sing Sing," "Tainted Love," and "Proud Mary") are enhanced here by dynamic orchestral arrangements (presented in Dolby Digital stereo) and vivid lighting effects, making for solid entertainment. Recommended. Aud: P. (E. Hulse)



**Company** ★★★

(2007) 132 min. DVD: \$14.99, Blu-ray: \$29.98. Image Entertainment (avail. from most distributors).



John Doyle's 2006 Broadway revival of Stephen Sondheim's 1970 musical—revolving around an unmarried, commitment-phobic man named Bobby (Raúl Esparza) and his friends—follows the cabaret pattern of Sondheim's earlier version of *Sweeney Todd* in using a minimalist set and a cast who also serve as the instrumentalists. Quite frankly the sight of them lugging around flutes, trumpets, saxes, violins, cellos, and even a bass as they deliver their lines or vocalize is distracting (fortunately, the piano remains stationary), and many will prefer other available productions in which the orchestra remains offstage. But once you become accustomed to the odd convention, the intimate performance of this Tony Award-winner, shot before a live audience at New York's Ethel Barrymore Theatre, is both solid and well-sung. In fact with its excellent sound (Dolby Digital 5.1 and stereo on the standard DVD and DTS-HD Master 5.1 on the Blu-ray disc) and remarkably fluid camerawork, this is a strong version of a show that actually seems to improve over the years. DVD/Blu-ray extras include interviews with Doyle and Esparza, as well as a lengthy and absorbing conversation between Sondheim and interviewer Jonathan Biggins, in which the composer-lyricist discusses his entire career, offering incisive recollections about his work, as well as his colleagues and collaborators. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (F. Swietek)