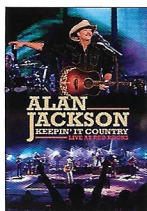


**Alan Jackson: Keepin' It Country, Live at Red Rocks ★★★**

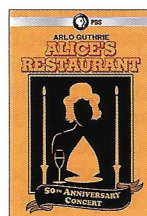
(2015) 106 min. DVD: \$14.98. Eagle Rock Entertainment (avail. from most distributors).



In this concert filmed at Colorado's Red Rocks—the last stop on a 2015 tour—country star Alan Jackson celebrates 25 years in the music business, sharing highlights from his biography during the 26-song set. Jackson moved from Georgia to Nashville to launch his career, releasing his debut *Here in the Real World* in 1990. Unlike his singles, which took awhile to catch on, Jackson's album became a hit, like most of his follow-ups, including 2015's *Angels and Alcohol*. Here, he receives strong accompaniment from veteran players on steel guitar, piano, bass, and drums, as well as the youthful-looking Ryan Joseph on fiddle (the Philadelphia musician is also the only non-Southerner). Jackson has a feel for what will please his audience, smoothly alternating between old and new, up-tempo (“Don't Rock the Jukebox”) and down-tempo (“Here in the Real World”). During the instrumental passages, he mingles with the drizzle-spattered crowd (they even sing along with Tom T. Hall's “Little Bitty”), tossing guitar picks and t-shirts while signing as many items as he can. Jackson's voice is in fine form and his band shines at every turn, making this a treat for Jackson fans. Presented in DTS 5.1, Dolby Digital 5.1 and stereo, this is recommended. (K. Fennessy)

**Arlo Guthrie: Alice's Restaurant—50th Anniversary Concert ★★★**

(2015) 98 min. DVD: \$24.99 (\$54.99 w/PPR), Blu-ray: \$29.99 (\$54.99 w/PPR). PBS Video (avail. from most distributors). SDH captioned. ISBN: 978-1-62789-491-3 (dvd), 978-1-62789-492-0 (blu-ray).

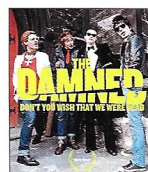


With his son Abe on keyboards as part of his able backup band, folk singer Arlo Guthrie hits the stage of the Colonial Theatre in Pittsfield, MA, for this May 2015 concert, performing a 14-song set that features as much talkin' as it does singin'. Which is OK, because Guthrie is a mighty fine raconteur who has honed his story repertoire over the years. The first third is fairly slow, kicking off with “The Motorcycle Song,” a solid rendition of “St. James Infirmary,” and the humorous kid's song “Me and My Goose” (spoiler alert: feathered pal ends up on dinner plate), coupled with some tongue-in-cheek whining about self-esteem-centered politically correct children's programming. The energy rises with the rockin' “Coming Into Los Angeles,” followed by the titular *piece de resistance*: the full-length musical monologue

epic “Alice's Restaurant,” which chronicles young Arlo's run-in with the law after illegally dumping trash on Thanksgiving day when the dump in Stockbridge, MA, was closed (an incident later adapted into a 1969 film directed by Arthur Penn). Guthrie also shares poignant stories about his legendary father, Woody, and his late wife, Jackie, who died of cancer in 2012. Guthrie, who shifts between guitar and keyboards (with some harmonica thrown in) also performs the classic “This Land Is Your Land,” as well as two songs with lyrics penned by the elder Guthrie (“I Hear You Sing Again” and “My Peace”), and his own only Top 40 hit, “City of New Orleans” (which he thanks Johnny Cash for turning down). Presented in Dolby Digital 5.1, extras include a “Garbage Trail Walk” featurette spotlighting key sites in the “Alice's Restaurant” saga. Sure to appeal to Baby Boomers and others with an interest in tales from the late 1960s and early '70s, this is recommended. (R. Pitman)

**The Damned: Don't You Wish That We Were Dead ★★★**

(2016) 110 min. Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$24.95. MVD Entertainment Group (avail. from most distributors).



Director Wes Orshoski uses the Damned's 35th anniversary tour in 2011 as a framing device to recount the group's tumultuous history. Drummer Chris Millar (aka Rat Scabies) and bassist Ray Burns (aka Captain Sensible) met while cleaning bathrooms in the same London concert hall. Once they joined forces with singer Dave Vanian and guitarist Brian James, the first incarnation of the band was complete. Although they emerged at the same time as the Sex Pistols and the Clash, they were the first to release a record. Chrissie Hynde of the Pretenders notes that the Damned could actually play their instruments, while Clem Burke and Chris Stein of Blondie praise their live shows, where anything could happen. Their debut, 1977's *Damned Damned Damned*, caused a sensation, but there were already signs of trouble since Burns and Vanian liked to play pranks, while James, who wrote most of the material, found that sort of thing childish. After their second album, *Music for Pleasure*, James left, so Burns switched to guitar. The conveyor belt of bass players didn't dent their popularity, but due to royalty disputes, Burns and Vanian are the only original members left. Miller and James have been playing concerts together, but the twain may never meet again. Orshoski also incorporates comments from famous fans who debate whether the move from punk to pop and goth was a good idea or not. Extras include extended interviews, mostly with the ever-voluble Burns. Recommended. (K. Fennessy)

**Don Quixote ★★★1/2**

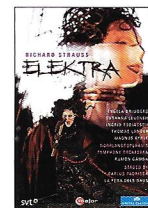
(2014) 120 min. DVD: \$24.99, Blu-ray: \$39.99. C Major (dist. by Naxos of America).



In Ludwig Minkus's cheerily inconsequential 1869 ballet, very loosely based on Miguel de Cervantes's 1605 masterpiece—the primary focus is on an impecunious barber named Basilio, who romances lovely lass Kitri, although her father wants to marry her off to a wealthy suitor. Don Quixote and Sancho Panza show up as comic figures to assist Basilio. *Don Quixote* was recently spotlighted in a 2013 performance (VL-7/14) by London's Royal Ballet, although in that production Minkus's score was adapted and re-orchestrated by conductor Martin Yates, and the choreography was based on Marius Petipa's original. By contrast, this 2014 version from Milan's La Scala features John Lanchbery's reworking of the score and the choreography that Rudolf Nureyev devised for the 1973 Australian Ballet mounting in which he danced Basilio. In either form, the ballet is a charming confection, and both productions are opulent, with colorful costumes and striking sets. And in each case the chief performers—here Leonid Sarafanov (Basilio), Natalia Osipova (Kitri), Giuseppe Conte (Don Quixote), and Gianluca Schiavoni (Sancho Panza)—as well as the company corps, are excellent. This version also benefits from crisp orchestral work and energetic conducting by Alexander Titov. Presented in DTS 5.1 (DTS-HD 5.1 on the Blu-ray release) and PCM stereo, this is highly recommended, especially for those who do not already own the 2013 London Royal Ballet version. (F. Swietek)

**Elektra ★★**

(2014) 108 min. In German w/English subtitles. DVD: \$24.99, Blu-ray: \$39.99. C Major/Unitel Classica (dist. by Naxos of America).



Opera has always been an exercise in spectacle along with music and drama, but today's visual effects are frequently given priority over content. Such is the case with this 2014 production of Richard Strauss's 1909 one-act piece derived from Sophocles's tragic tragedy. The plot is simple: Elektra tries to persuade her sister Chrysothemis and brother Orest to help her kill their mother Klytämnestra and her lover Aegisth, who together murdered the siblings' father Agamemnon upon the latter's return home from the Trojan War. *Elektra* is a powerful, concise work that can benefit from a very stark staging. Here, however, it is presented by NorrlandsOperan in a huge outdoor area—actually a parking lot—in Umeå, Sweden, with staging by the Catalan theatre collective La Fura dels Baus that features lakes of blood-red liquid, and huge, crane-operated giants (the singers