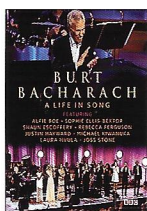


Burt Bacharach: A Life in Song ★★1/2

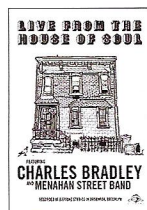
(2015) 89 min. DVD: \$14.98, Blu-ray: \$19.98. Eagle Rock Entertainment (avail. from most distributors).



Filmed live at London's Royal Albert Hall in 2015, this celebration of the life and work of Burt Bacharach, a key contributor to the Great American Songbook during the last half of the 20th century, interweaves a live onstage interview of the 87-year-old composer by Michael Grade between performances of many of Bacharach's signature songs by British artists mostly unknown to American audiences. The charming, urbane Bacharach genially responds to Grade's generic questions concerning major influences (jazz), favorite song ("Alfie"), and fruitful relationship with lyricist Hal David, although aside from some reminiscences about childhood, Bacharach says almost nothing about his personal life. The questions are all keyed to segue into songs, starting with Rebecca Ferguson's rendition of "Walk on By" and Laura Mvula singing "Do You Know the Way to San Jose?"—both popularized by Dionne Warwick in the 1960s. Although technically a 14-song set, one of those numbers is a movie medley of 10 tunes, including "Arthur's Theme," "What's New Pussycat?," and "Raindrops Keep Fallin' on My Head," some of which are sung in frail voice by Bacharach (who was never a strong vocalist to begin with). Viewers will likely recognize the Moody Blues's lead singer Justin Hayward ("What the World Needs Now") and white soul sensation Joss Stone ("In Between the Heartaches"), but fewer will know Michael Kiwanuka, Sophie Ellis-Bextor, or Shaun Escoffery. Backed by an orchestra, all of the singers offer up serviceable renditions of Bacharach's hits, but no performances are especially fiery (although, to be fair, the music itself—with beautiful, timeless melodies—falls more into the easy listening area). Presented in DTS 5.1, Dolby Digital 5.1 and stereo on DVD, and DTS-HD 5.1 and LPCM stereo on Blu-ray, extras include three bonus songs. A strong optional purchase. (R. Pitman)

Charles Bradley: Live from the House of Soul

★★★
(2016) 30 min. DVD: \$16.95. MVD Entertainment Group (avail. from most distributors).

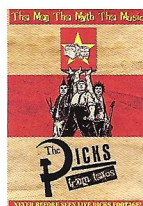


Daptone recording artist Charles Bradley stars in this inaugural edition of the label's concert series in which artists offer separately-taped comments between each song. For the seven-song set, the "Screaming Eagle of Soul" is accompanied by the eight-member Menahan Street Band in the courtyard of the Brooklyn

label's tenement offices. Drummer Homer Steinweiss's Nordic sweater, quilted vest, and woolly scarf indicate a relatively cold day. Other players include Thomas Brenneck (guitar), Nick Movshon (bass), Mike Deller (piano and organ), Dave Guy (trumpet), Leon Michels (saxophone), and Paul and Bill Scalda (backing vocals). A former James Brown impersonator, 67-year-old Bradley sings in a rough and ready voice over the group's brass-saturated backing. About the song "Confusion," which borrows funk moves from Edwin Starr and the Temptations, Bradley notes that he "can't be anybody but Charles," perhaps a reference to his evolution from copyist to one-of-a-kind. Although there's no audience, Bradley still busts out the screams, gestures, and old-school dance moves of his popular stage show. The original compositions illustrate his familiarity with the soul music of the 1960s and '70s, but the inclusion of one of his slow-burn rock-and-roll covers would have been ideal, particularly Black Sabbath's "Changes," off his new album of the same title, or Nirvana's "Stay Away" from a 2011 *SPIN* compilation. Presented in stereo, extras include four music videos. Recommended. (K. Fennessy)

The Dicks from Texas

★★★
(2015) 70 min. DVD: \$19.95. MVD Entertainment Group (avail. from most distributors).

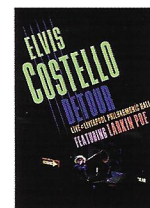


At the dawn of the 1980s, a time when punk revolved around wiry heterosexuals, Gary Floyd stood out from the crowd. Cindy Marabito's scrappy documentary recounts the history of his short-lived outfit, the Dicks. Floyd explains that a fat gay kid growing up in Austin had his work cut out for him, but once punk arrived, he found his salvation. Floyd knew that he would be able to come out at some point, but decided not to rush it. Friends remember Floyd in those early days as a character who tacked pictures of Chairman Mao on his walls, wore lingerie on stage, and threw detergent at concertgoers. In some photographs, Floyd looks like Divine with his theatrical makeup and polyester dresses. In 1979, he formed the Dicks with guitarist Glen Taylor, bassist Buxf Parrot, and drummer Pat Deason, and they released their first single "Hate the Police" in 1980, following up with the album *Kill from the Heart* in 1983. Ian MacKaye (Minor Threat) says the Dicks were "a force to be reckoned with," while Henry Rollins recalls, "They were always great, but they were always kind of shambolic." Just as the band was gaining a national following, Floyd suggested a move to San Francisco, but his band mates eventually returned to Austin, and the Dicks came to an end. Floyd would move on to Sister Double Happiness, but the occasional Dicks reunion ensures that their flame lives on. Extras include

never-before-seen footage of the Dicks in performance. Presented in stereo, this solid music documentary with added LGBT interest is recommended. (K. Fennessy)

Elvis Costello—Detour: Live at Liverpool Philharmonic Hall

★★★
(2015) 105 min. DVD: \$14.98, Blu-ray: \$19.98. Eagle Rock Entertainment (avail. from most distributors).



Musical chameleon Elvis Costello—whose work encompasses New Wave, pop, jazz, country, and folk, among other genres—gets off to a somewhat shaky solo start in this 2015 performance filmed live at the Liverpool Philharmonic Hall, serving up three early hits—"Red Shoes," "Watch Your Step," and "Accidents Will Happen"—that all sound better as multi-instrument rockers rather than amplified acoustic guitar numbers ("Accidents," in particular, is a trainwreck). But after switching guitars, Costello rebounds with stirring renditions of "Church Underground" and "45," before shifting to the piano for a wonderful "Shipbuilding" and a blues variation on "I Can't Stand Up for Falling Down." Costello performs 22 songs in total, joined on seven by sisters Rebecca and Megan Lovell—from American roots band Larkin Poe—who play lap steel guitar and mandolin, respectively. Performing on a set that vaguely resembles an early '60s living room with a giant TV screen (featuring pictures of Costello and family members), Costello occasionally breaks for long (and meaty) anecdotes about his grandfather and father (the latter played with the Beatles before the Queen, and is seen here in a great music video singing "If I Had a Hammer"). That these personal stories carry much more narrative weight than the usual between-songs patter from musicians is at least partially due to the fact that Costello recently released his nearly-700-page memoir *Unfaithful Music & Disappearing Ink*. In keeping with his Seeger-singing dad, Costello also comments on the plight of the working man in these economically disheveled times, particularly with the powerful "Jimmie Standing in the Rain" (which he closes by leaving the microphone, approaching the edge of the stage, and singing a plaintive bit of "Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?"). Other highlights include a spot-on version of "Alison," a fun "Side By Side," and a rousing "(What's So Funny 'Bout) Peace, Love and Understanding" (so energetic that Costello breaks a guitar string)—a song that seems to be eternally relevant, especially so in these saber-rattling times. Presented in DTS 5.1, Dolby Digital 5.1 and stereo on DVD, and DTS-HD 5.1 and LPCM stereo on Blu-ray, extras include four bonus songs. Recommended. (R. Pitman)