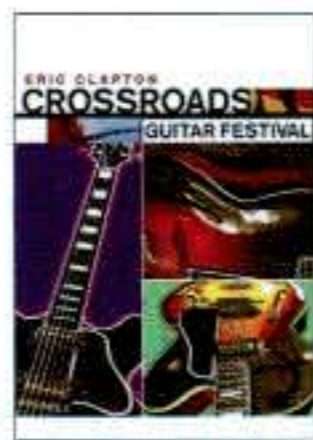


Crossroads Guitar Festival ★★★1/2

(2004) 2 discs. 210 min. DVD: \$29.99. Warner Music Vision (avail. from most distributors). Color cover.



Organized as a fundraiser for the Crossroads Centre in the West Indies' Antigua (Eric Clapton's non-profit drug and alcohol rehab clinic), the Crossroads Guitar Festival ran three days in June of 2004 and featured several of the blues-rock legend's heroes and cronies. Clapton is all over this double-disc, 37-song set, playing a blistering version of J.J. Cale's "Cocaine" and later accompanying Cale himself on the latter's spidery, mysterious "After Midnight" and the psychedelic boogie of "Call Me the Breeze." You'll also find him on a titanic duet ("Jingo") with Carlos Santana, paired with Robert Cray, Buddy Guy, Jimmie Vaughan, and B.B. King on several classics ("Sweet Home Chicago," "Rock Me Baby"), and invoking Robert Johnson's ghost on the fantastic "If I Had Possession Over Judgment Day." James Taylor joins Jerry Douglas ("the Muhammad Ali of the dobro") on a lilting "Copperline," and has a blast with Joe Walsh (who later solos on "Rocky Mountain Way") on "Steamroller." Rocker Steve Vai, pedal-steel wizard Robert Randolph, blues enthusiast John Mayer, fusion maestro John McLaughlin, and country legend Vince Gill also spend time in the spotlight, while Texas favorite ZZ Top closes the festival with a lively, hambone "Tush." Presented in Dolby Digital 5.1 sound, DVD extras include artist interviews and a photo gallery. Highly recommended. Aud: P. (T. Keogh)

The Frank Sinatra Show with Ella Fitzgerald ★★★1/2

(2004) 60 min. DVD: \$14.95. Music Video Distributors (avail. from most distributors). Color cover.



The '50s were fab for Frank: he won a Best Supporting Actor Oscar in '54 for *From Here to Eternity*, he made a string of hit albums for Capitol Records (most with arranger-conductor Nelson Riddle, that still rank as the best of his career), the Beatles had yet to appear and put Sinatra (and everyone else) into at least partial eclipse, and he had his own TV show, from which this particular program is taken. Scheduled to be filmed outdoors in Palm Springs, but moved inside due to rain (resulting in the use of sets that were makeshift at best), Sinatra reacts here with the kind of "so what?" confidence one would expect from the Chairman, and everyone else happily goes along for the ride, especially Rat Packer Peter Lawford (who was married to the sister of then-Senator John F. Kennedy) and dancer-singer Juliet Prowse, Sinatra's squeeze at the time. Recorded in 1959, this hour isn't

nearly as enjoyable as the one with Elvis Presley (VL-5/04) from the following year—unless, of course, a Lawford-Prowse duet and an appearance by Brit entertainer Hermione Gingold are your idea of heaven. But it does have Ella Fitzgerald, who's sublime on the ballad "There's a Lull in My Life," totally swinging on "Just You, Just Me," and amusing in her one duet with Frank (on "Can't We Be Friends"). As on the Sinatra-Presley program, the black-and-white visuals here are poor, and the audio suffers from terrible tape hiss. Nevertheless, this is a worthy document that's sure to appeal to Sinatra fans, making it a strong optional purchase. Aud: P. (S. Graham)

Funky Meters Live ★★★1/2

(2005) 92 min. DVD: \$19.98. Shout! Factory (avail. from most distributors). Color cover. ISBN: 0-7389-2786-4.



Art Neville's longtime band the Meters (rechristened the Funky Meters in 1994) are captured live here at the 2000 New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival, and their relaxed, yet often stunning performance—outdoors on a beautiful day, before a crowd of sun-worshippers—is a must-see for old fans and newcomers alike. Stretching 11 tunes over 90-plus minutes, the Funky Meters compositions have room to breathe while maintaining taut, disciplined funk rhythms and exploring the edges of blues, gospel, rock, and classic soul. "People Say" is bright, chipper fun, the epic "Africa" smolders, the delightful "Cissy Strut" has a lightness of touch paradoxically offset by a low but compelling rumble, and the fantastic "7 Desires"—a showcase for indefatigable guitarist and vocalist Brian Stoltz—is a warm, R&B ballad that might have suited the Temptations in another era. Presented in Dolby Digital 5.1 sound, DVD extras include interviews with Neville and bassist George Porter, Jr. Highly recommended. Aud: P. (T. Keogh)

Ike & Tina Turner: Live in '71 ★★★

(2004) 60 min. DVD: \$19.98 (CD included). Eagle Vision (avail. from most distributors). Color cover.



With a voice that was raw and powerful but sensual as well, a set of gams to die for, and a booty that shook like the San Andreas Fault, Tina Turner in her prime was something to behold. And if her husband, guitarist and bandleader Ike Turner, was by most accounts a violent, drug-abusing Svengali, when the Ike & Tina Turner Revue hit the stage, the musical magic was palpable. This 1971 concert, recorded in the Netherlands, is representative; not one of their best, maybe, but good, especially with improved visual quality and fine (if a little flat-

sounding) DTS and Dolby Digital 5.1 audio. Their repertoire, all cover tunes, ranges from older items such as Bobby "Blue" Bland's "I Smell Trouble" to a batch of then-contemporary rock songs, including the Beatles' "Come Together," the Rolling Stones' "Honky Tonk Woman," and, of course, their indelible hit version of Creedence Clearwater Revival's "Proud Mary," with Ike, Tina, and company gradually going from "nice 'n easy" to "rough" (and quite a ride it is). They also perform the two songs they'd recorded with producer Phil Spector, including the mighty (but ultimately disappointing, sales-wise) "River Deep, Mountain High." From a musical standpoint, it's all good, but the Revue wasn't just about music, it was also about Tina and the three lkettes (all of them sporting dresses that ended about a foot above their knees), dancing to Ike's choreographed routines and literally working their butts off. An accompanying CD contains most of the same tunes, but it's the concert footage that makes this a hot item. Recommended. Aud: P. (S. Graham)

Jazz Memories: The Incomparable Lena Horne ★★★1/2

(2004) 65 min. DVD: \$19.95. Music Video Distributors (avail. from most distributors). Color cover.



Lena Horne—singer, actress, star of a long-running solo show on Broadway, civil rights activist, and a renowned beauty—is undoubtedly one of the more notable American artists of the 20th century. Now in her late eighties, this is a woman whom Duke Ellington memorably described as "an American standard, and the essence of total agreeability." Unfortunately, this rather dry documentary doesn't fully do her justice. Granted, there are plenty of film clips of Horne in action, including a full performance of her hit "Stormy Weather," and some interesting biographical notes: plagued by racism throughout her long career, she was scorned when she married white bandleader Lennie Hayton, blacklisted during the McCarthy witch hunts of the 1950s, and limited to minor singing roles in the mainstream (i.e., non-black) movies in which she appeared; ironically, when the Max Factor cosmetics company created the so-called "Light Egyptian" makeup for the light-skinned Horne (to make her darker and thus more apposite for black films), the product ended up being used by white actresses to secure "mulatto roles" for themselves! But what *The Incomparable Lena Horne* sorely lacks is any input from the lady herself. Neither Horne nor anyone else is interviewed (it would have been nice, for instance, to hear her take on an incident at a Beverly Hills restaurant where she broke the nose of a drunken idiot hurling racial epithets from the next table). On the extras side, the disc includes (in its 75-minute