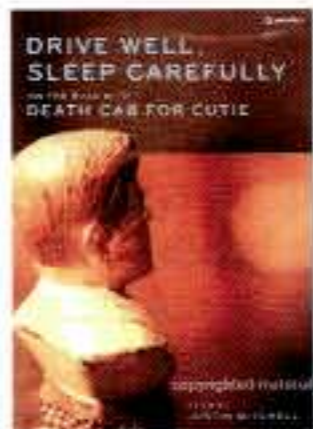


taste in music ("I always thought Bach was a nervous man," he quips, but he digs the more mellow Chopin, Sibelius, and Sinatra), among other topics. He's joined by the Raelettes for a few numbers, but he mostly appears alone onstage, with the unseen Cavett house band providing able if not exactly inspired backing. Other guests include actor Tony Randall, anthropologist Margaret Mead, and New York mayor John Lindsay, but this one's all about Ray—and that's a beautiful thing. Recommended. [Note: *The Dick Cavett Show: John & Yoko Collection* is also newly available.] Aud: C, P. (S. Graham)

Drive Well, Sleep Carefully: On the Road with Death Cab for Cutie ★★★

(2005) 86 min. DVD: \$24.98. Plexifilm (avail. from most distributors). Color cover.



This film, we're told, is not about the underground vs. the mainstream, or independent record labels vs. the majors; no, director Justin Mitchell's *Drive Well, Sleep Carefully* is merely "a story of a band on the road." Just what we needed: another documentary about the sorry life of rock stars as they deal with the loneliness and isolation of touring, struggling to maintain their sanity as they drag themselves onstage to perform hit tunes before ecstatic, sold-out crowds. Actually, this one is considerably better than most. Seattle-based Death Cab for Cutie (guitarist-vocalist Ben Gibbard, bassist Nick Harmer, guitarist and sometimes organist Chris Walla, and drummer Jason McGerr) do talk about the difficulty of keeping things fresh while playing the same songs night after night (Walla wonders about the guy in the very last row: "Is he rockin' out?"), but there's little of the usual grouching about what a drag it all is. Of the 13 (mostly complete) live performances included here, the majority are drawn from the band's CDs *Transatlanticism* and *The Photo Album*, featuring solid indie rock, driven by Gibbard's melodic songwriting and appealing, almost gentle voice. The underpinnings of thick, distorted guitars give the music a dreamlike throb (Gibbard's lyrics, on the other hand, are nigh indiscernible), and the live sound, presented here in Dolby Digital stereo, has the kind of intimacy usually found in studio recordings. Overall, *Drive Well, Sleep Carefully* (with DVD extras including a brief live acoustic set, rehearsal footage, additional interviews, and more) is as unpretentious and likeable as the band itself. Recommended. Aud: P. (S. Graham)

Eagles: Farewell I Tour ★★★

(2004) 2 discs. 180 min. DVD: \$29.99. Warner Strategic Marketing (avail. from most distributors). Color cover.

The Eagles are still huge, a big-time concert attraction and commercial force (their

greatest hits album is said to be the bestselling album in the history of the universe). But honestly, how many times do you want to see/hear these guys play "Desperado" and "Hotel California" in the exact same way, duplicating the original recorded performances note-for-note? Apparently, the answer for some folks is "a lot." Recorded in 2004 in Melbourne, Australia, Farewell I Tour contains no less than 30 songs, spread out over two discs (and well over two and a half hours) covering their whole career, from "Take it Easy" and "Peaceful Easy Feeling" through "Love Will Keep Us Alive" (from *Hell Freezes Over*, their most recent recording with new material on it). There's some interesting sideline material this time, too, including Joe Walsh's "One Day at a Time" (an earnest, almost painfully on-the-nose ode to his newfound sobriety) and "Hole in the World," Glenn Frey and Don Henley's moving, slightly gospel-tinged reaction to the events of 9/11. Guitarist Don Felder, who split acrimoniously with the band in 2001, isn't much missed, as his replacement plays the parts just as Felder did—i.e., just as they were recorded. Presented in DTS 5.1 and PCM stereo (DVD extras are limited to perfunctory interviews with the band), the sound is great, as are the visuals, and the crowd loves it: so what's the problem? Maybe it's that certain smugness about these dudes (witness the DVD title) and Frey's onstage admission that a Farewell II Tour is pretty much a given. Is this mere nitpicking? Eagles fans will say so, and they will certainly flock to this comprehensive live catalog. Recommended, overall. Aud: P. (S. Graham)



The English Beat: In Concert at the Royal Festival Hall ★★1/2

(2003) 86 min. DVD: \$19.95. Music Video Distributors (avail. from most distributors). Color cover.



Although they released only three LPs (all between 1980-1982), the ska New Wave band English Beat caught the British, and to a lesser extent, American ear with their blend of pop rock and reggae on hit remakes of Smoky Robinson's "Tears of a Clown" and Andy Williams' "Can't Get Used to Losing You," as well as originals such as "Mirror in the Bathroom," "Best Friend," "Save It for Later," and the anti-Thatcher anthem "Stand Down Margaret." Filmed live at London's Royal Festival Hall in 2003, this generous 20-song concert finds original members Dave Wakeling (guitar, vocals), Ranking Roger (vocals), Saxa (saxophone), and Everett Morton (drums) being backed by Neil Deathridge and Andy Pearson on guitar and bass, respectively (Andy Cox and Dave

Steele, who went on to form Fine Young Cannibals are not here). Although the song selection is for the most part solid (notable omissions include "I Confess" and "Sole Salvation," two of the best cuts off 1982's *Special Beat Service*), the sound—presented in both Dolby Digital 5.1 and stereo—is a bit disappointing (some of this is the fault of the recording, but sometimes the band just sounds bad). The only extra is a 49-minute interview with Ranking Roger and two others that is virtually unwatchable as the video and audio are out of sync. Optional. [Note: MVD is also releasing two other DVDs featuring ska bands: *Bad Manners: Live in Concert* and *The Selector: Live from London*.] Aud: P. (R. Pitman)

Gianni Schicchi ★★★

(2004) 74 min. In Italian w/English subtitles. DVD: \$24.99 (booklet included). BBC Opus Arte (dist. by Naxos of America). Color cover.



Gianni Schicchi, Puccini's taut, darkly comic one-act masterpiece, depends on topnotch ensemble acting, precise comic timing, and vocal unity in all 10 roles, all of which are present in this virtually flawless 2004 production filmed at the Glyndebourne Opera House. Based on an episode in Dante's *Inferno*, the story opens with the death of a wealthy man who has left his estate to a religious order, much to the consternation of the greedy relatives surrounding his bed. In an effort to break the will, they bring in a local, Gianni Schicchi, who not only succeeds but also outsmarts the lot and winds up with the prize. In between, the opera offers lots of gleefully sinister comedy along with a sweet romantic complication. No detail has been neglected: the attractive principals Alessandro Corbelli (as Schicchi), Massimo Giordano and Sally Matthews (as the lovers Rinuccio and Lauretta), and Felicity Palmer (as Aunt Zita) mesh perfectly with the rest of the ensemble action, in a production beautifully choreographed by director Annabel Arden and sporting subdued yet attractive costumes and sets, backed by the London Philharmonic under the superb direction of Vladimir Jurowski. Presented in DTS and LPCM stereo, this is a delight from start to finish. DVD extras include interviews, a cast gallery, and an illustrated synopsis. Highly recommended. Editor's Choice. Aud: C, P. (J. Reed)

The Great Kat: Extreme Guitar Shred ★

(2005) 15 min. DVD: \$9.95. Music Video Distributors (avail. from most distributors). Color cover.



Whoa. Dude, this chick freakin' rocks! Check that... she friggin' shreds! Not only that, she's, like, a real musician, who studied violin at Juil-