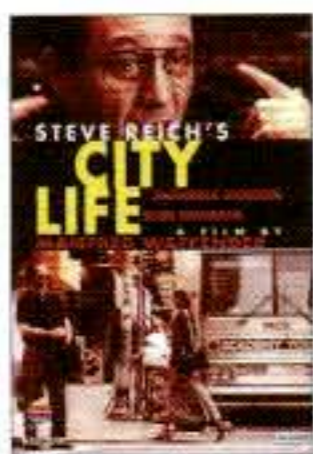


and "Cities in Dust"), they all start to sound pretty much the same. Some of the music is enlivened by the work of Budgie and Taiko master Leonard Ito playing their respective kits together, and some suspense is provided wondering whether Siouxsie is going to spill out of one of her low-cut costumes. But the big drum sound and visual intrigue can't make the music—an uncomfortable mix of post-punk, faux cabaret chic, and art rock—palatable to much of an audience outside of Siouxsie's core fans. Presented in Dolby Digital 5.1 and stereo, DVD extras include five bonus songs from a week earlier warm-up gig at London's 100 Club (including "Hong Kong Garden," "2nd Floor," and "Not Forgotten"), as well as an interview with Siouxsie and Budgie, and rehearsal footage. Not recommended. Aud: P. (M. Moore)

Steve Reich's City Life

★★★★

(1995) 61 min. DVD: \$19.99. Kultur International Films. ISBN: 0-7697-8502-6.



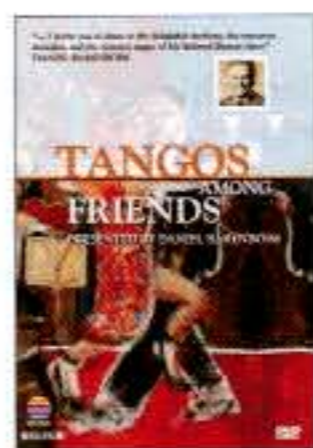
New York-born Steve Reich is an important figure in the minimalist school of modern American music, though his more recent works have moved beyond trademark simple repetitive patterns into what's sometimes termed post-minimalism. Manfred Waffender's 1995 documentary follows the composition of Reich's *City Life*—a piece designed to suggest the street sounds of the metropolis—followed by a full performance of the work. Reich's descriptions of his process are intercut with footage of New Yorkers going about their daily business—his raw material, as it were—and some archival footage is included that provides real insight into the way a piece of music is imagined and reshaped in a composer's mind. The film then turns to the music itself, a mostly propulsive work for strings, wind instruments, percussion and two pianos, incorporating repeated taped vocal interjections (some drawn from police dispatches), whistles, horns and keyboard sampling. After presenting excerpts from the rehearsals by the Ensemble Modern under conductor Sian Edwards—with enthusiastic input from Reich himself—the film moves on to the actual performance at the Opera House in Frankfurt (accompanied by a light show and film footage), concluding with shots of the composer congratulating the players backstage afterward. Offering a rare glimpse inside the creative process, this is recommended. Aud: C, P. (F. Swietek)

Tangos Among Friends

(1997) 54 min. DVD: \$19.99. Kultur International Films. ISBN: 0-7697-8482-8.

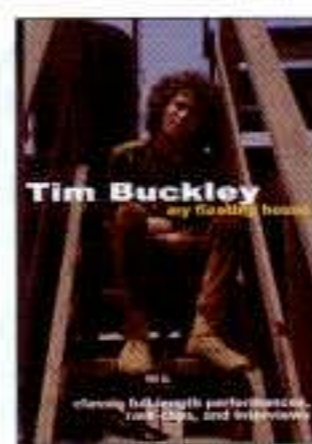
In this hour-shy 1997 performance docu-

mentary, classical pianist and conductor Daniel Barenboim returns to his birthplace of Buenos Aires to record tangos as part of an ensemble that also includes Rodolfo Mederos on the bandoleon and Hector Console on the double bass. The film features footage of the trio's rehearsals and concert performances of seven pieces—three by Carlos Gardel, and others by Astor Piazzolla, Horacio Salgán, and Alberto Ginastera. But *Tangos Among Friends* goes well beyond the music to offer a mini-history of the dance, using archival footage and excerpts from film musicals to present what amounts to a short biography of Gardel, who's described as the man who transformed the tango (originally a rather disreputable, lower-class dance form) into something both respected and beloved as the expression of the Argentine soul. Throughout, Barenboim's energetic commentary, supplemented by observations from musicologist-musicians such as Mederos and composers like Salgán, provides both a colorful explanation and an appreciation for the development and continuing vibrancy of the tango. Tenor Plácido Domingo shows up briefly not only to sing tangos to Barenboim's accompaniment, but also to man the keyboards himself. Both devotees of tango and fans of Barenboim will find much to enjoy here, although the filmmaking itself is rather ordinary, as is the LPCM stereo sound. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (F. Swietek)



Tim Buckley: My Fleeting House

(2007) 105 min. DVD: \$19.95. Music Video Distributors (avail. from most distributors).



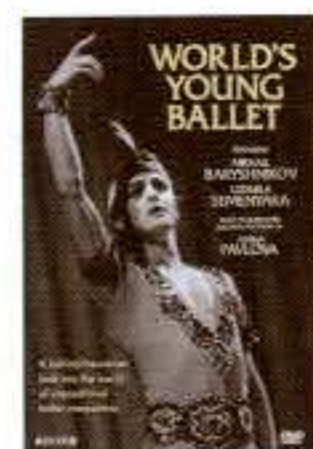
It's the late Jeff Buckley who gets most of the family praise these days (one pundit went so far as to label him "the Jimi Hendrix of his generation," which might be a bit of a stretch), but as good as he was, Jeff's impassioned style and soaring vocals were inherited from his father, Tim—even though the two met only once before the latter succumbed to a heroin overdose in 1975. *My Fleeting House* profiles an artist who, though just 28 when he died, had a remarkably prolific career (nine albums in eight years), marked by a willful inability to follow a predictable commercial path and a concomitant lack of material success. The 14 performances in this collection, most of them complete and previously unreleased (and varying in technical quality), range from 1967 ("Song to the Siren," from *The Monkees* TV show, of all places) to 1974 (an outstanding version of Fred Neil's "The Dolphins" from the Brit program *The Old*

Grey Whistle Test). The songs here also chart Tim's evolution from a fairly straight folkie with a 12-string guitar and a voice like an Irish tenor to a genuine iconoclast whose jazzy, experimental approach bore little resemblance to anything else that was happening at the time ("I Woke Up" and "Come Here Woman," from the *Starsailor* album, are rife with improvisational flourishes by Buckley's five-piece band). Some viewers will prefer more "normal" tunes like "Sing a Song for You" and "Happy Time" (both taken from a 1968 spot on Dutch TV), while others will thrill to the relative weirdness of "Venice Beach" and "Who Do You Love" (not the Bo Diddley classic); either way, *My Fleeting House* offers a portrait of a genuine original. Presented in Dolby Digital 5.1, DVD extras include comments by Buckley's songwriting partner, longtime guitarist, and biographer Larry Beckett. Recommended. Aud: P. (S. Graham)

World's Young Ballet

★★★★

(1990) 71 min. DVD: \$19.99. Kultur International Films. ISBN: 0-7697-8491-7.



Shot at the 1969 Moscow International Ballet Competition at the Bolshoi Theater, *World's Young Ballet* interweaves performances by the competitors with behind-the-scenes footage showing the young performers' preparations as well as the sightseeing opportunities they enjoyed in the former Soviet Union. The unquestionable highlight is the two dance sequences by a then-unknown Mikhail Baryshnikov—an excerpt from Léon Minkus' 1877 ballet *La Bayadère*, and a scene from a modern work, Leonid Jakobson's *Vestris* (Baryshnikov's spectacular performances were clearly deserving of the gold medal he won, a victory that proved an auspicious beginning to an amazing career). But the performances by the young Ludmila Semenyaka (from Adolphe Adam's 1841 *Giselle*, and a jazz composition titled *We*) are nearly as scintillating, and the remaining contestants are eminently watchable in scenes from works such as Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake* and Aram Khachaturian's *Spartacus*. A tour sequence features a brief archival clip with the legendary Anna Pavlova, while shots of the jury also afford glimpses of some notable Russian dancers, as well as Khachaturian and choreographer Agnes DeMille. Not surprisingly, the disc's visual and aural qualities are not up to modern standards, and the English narration is so prosaically rendered that at times the lack of emotion is nearly risible, but the historical significance of *World's Young Ballet* for ballet enthusiasts is undeniable. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (F. Swietek)