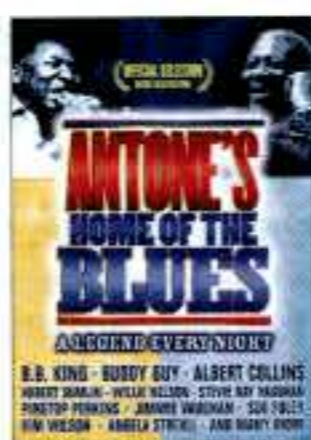


Antone's Home of the Blues ★★1/2

(2004) 99 min. DVD: \$19.98. Koch Vision (avail. from most distributors). Color cover. ISBN: 1-4172-2913-6.



We know within the first 10 minutes of this documentary/valentine that Clifford Antone (1939-2006)—who moved from steamy Port Arthur, Texas (also the hometown of Janis Joplin) to Austin to open his own blues club—was a tireless proponent of the blues, as well as a friend and patron to musicians both great and small; a dude who stayed the course whether the musical genre was in fashion or not. That's all good. So is the list of bluesmen (and women) who have appeared onstage at Antone's, ranging from B.B. King, Buddy Guy, John Lee Hooker, and Muddy Waters to lesser knowns such as Eddie Taylor and Jimmy Rogers and up-and-comers like brothers Stevie Ray and Jimmie Vaughan. But while we're promised performances by these and many others here, the actual clips are annoyingly brief (not to mention wildly varying in technical quality). Some of the stories here are amusing, especially those involving Muddy and Stevie Ray, and Antone clearly deserved the respect and affection of every musician who appeared on his stage, but Dan Karlok's *Antone's Home of the Blues* ultimately doesn't offer much in the way of shape or style, and considering that there's a whole lot of great footage of most of these musicians available elsewhere, this is strictly an optional purchase. Aud: C, P. (S. Graham)

Awesome: I...Shot That

★★★
(2006) 88 min. DVD: \$29.99. ThinkFilm (avail. from most distributors). Color cover. Closed captioned.



An unusual concert film, *Awesome* is a fan-based record of a Beastie Boys concert staged in New York City's Madison Square Garden in October 2004. The trio's creative team handed out 50 camcorders to volunteers in the audience, with the mandate that they had to keep shooting, resulting in a performance captured by amateurs who happen to love the group. While the raw, rough images are certainly novel, the real accomplishment lies in the editing of all that crude footage into something with a sense of rhythm behind it. For the most part, each of the 26 raps and songs served up here are distinguished by manic cutting and added effects: "An Open Letter to NYC," for instance, is drained of color and tweaked in post-production with time delays within the action; "So What'cha Want" is occasionally solarized (i.e., "negative" images); "Brass Monkey" is a rap-a-long focusing primarily on the audience, and "Root Down" is largely shot looking

up from the edge of the stage. The whole shebang culminates in a noisy "Sabotage," one of the Beasties' biggest hits. Presented in bass-thumping Dolby Digital 5.1 and stereo, DVD extras include a "making-of" featurette and audio commentary by the band. Recommended. Aud: P. (T. Keogh)

Black Uhuru with Sly & Robbie: Dubbin' It Live

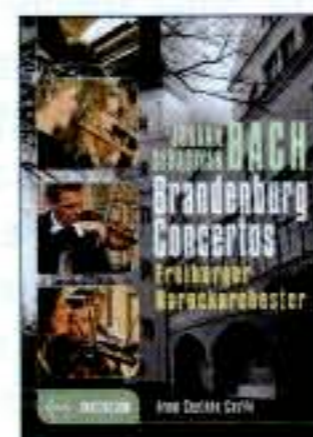
★★★1/2
(2001) 75 min. DVD: \$19.95. Music Video Distributors (avail. from most distributors). Color cover.



Sly Dunbar and Robbie Shakespeare join their former band Black Uhuru for a nine-song set—including "What Is Life," "World Is Africa," and "Solidarity"—in this sparkling reunion headlining the Paleo Festival in Nyon, Switzerland in the summer of 2001. Sly and Robbie (the Riddim Twins) are reggae royalty whose influence as producers crosses over into a number of other genres. Here, the authentic reggae rhythms hold sway as the twins set the pace for a Uhuru lineup fronted by vocalist Andrew Bees, with Darryl Thompson's wild guitar solos taking several of the songs in a decidedly rock direction, and surprisingly prominent keyboards by Tony Asher Brissett. Bees is the focal point with his aerobic dance moves and relentless shouts of "Yeah-oh!" Presented in Dolby Digital 5.1, with the sole DVD extra being an alternate camera angle on three tracks, this is a no-frills concert—no cutaways, no distractions, no interruptions—featuring a crack, smart reggae outfit captured at the top of its game. Highly recommended. Aud: P. (M. Moore)

Brandenburg Concertos—Freiburger Barockorchester from Cothen Castle ★★★

(2000) 95 min. DVD: \$19.99 (booklet included). EuroArts (dist. by Naxos of America). Color cover.

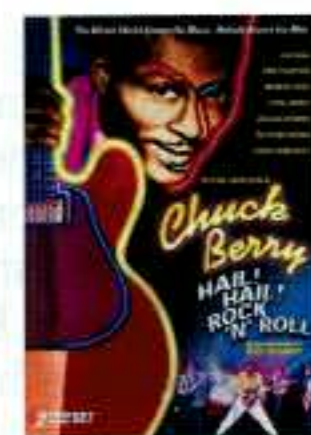


The six *Brandenburg Concertos*—composed by Johann Sebastian Bach in 1721 and dedicated to the Margrave of Brandenburg—are unquestionably the most famous *concerti grossi* of the Baroque era. On this well-engineered disc they receive lithe, graceful readings by a fine original instrument group, the Freiburger Barockorchester—led by violinist Gottfried von der Goltz—filmed at the Hall of Mirrors in Cothen Castle, a particularly suitable site, since it's presumed the concertos were written for its court orchestra. The music, of course, is endlessly inventive, marked by elegant and effervescent strings, to which are periodically added horns, oboes, flutes, a high trumpet (in the second concerto), and even a solo harpsichord (in the fifth) featuring an elaborate cadenza that the dour-looking

Michael Behringer tosses off with aplomb. The camerawork is fluid, the sound excellent (with Dolby Digital 5.1 and PCM stereo options), and the DVD includes three extras: the first two are musical—a sarabande from the fifth cello suite and a final trio from the "Coffee" Cantata—while the third is an odd little featurette in which a cardboard cutout of Bach is glimpsed tottering around the grounds at Cothen while the Freiburgers perform his music, a joke that runs out of steam pretty quickly. Recommended. Aud: H, C, P. (F. Swietek)

Chuck Berry: Hail! Hail! Rock 'n' Roll (The Ultimate Collector's Edition) ★★★1/2

(1987) 4 discs. 120 min. DVD: \$49.99. Image Entertainment (avail. from most distributors). Color cover.



With Chuck Berry set to turn 80 in October, this spectacular reissue of *Hail! Hail! Rock 'n' Roll*, director Taylor Hackford's 1987 concert documentary, is certainly timely...and revealing. Music fans already know that Berry can justifiably call himself "the father of rock 'n' roll"—his songs "Maybellene," "Johnny B. Goode," "Roll Over Beethoven," "Rock & Roll Music," and so on—defined the genre, as did his guitar playing, and he was worshipped by the Beatles and the Rolling Stones, both of whom recorded several Berry tunes. In fact, when the film's producers decided to mark his 60th birthday with a gala concert in his native St. Louis, Keith Richards volunteered to put together the band, and a host of other big names—including Eric Clapton and Linda Ronstadt—were happy to take part. But while the concert was an unqualified success, presented here with a crisp new transfer and Dolby Digital 5.1 audio, dealing with the star (he was also one of the film's producers) proved to be torturous for filmmakers and musicians alike. Berry, it seems, is a decidedly prickly fellow and an inveterate skinflint. Instead of paying a regular band, he'd just arrive at a gig and go onstage with whoever the promoter had rounded up to back him (including a very young Bruce Springsteen), and once willingly went to jail—his third of three terms in the slammer—instead of paying his back taxes. For this film, Berry tried to renegotiate his own deal every day, and would refuse to be filmed unless he was paid in cash. Two days before the climactic St. Louis concert, Berry announced that he was leaving town for a gig in Ohio, where he made some extra jack but ruined his voice, with the result that his vocals all had to be overdubbed after the fact. These and other dark revelations can be found in the hours of excellent bonus materials on discs two, three, and four of this set, along with many more agreeable moments (like Chuck jamming with Clapton, Richards, and Etta James, or nostalgically poring over his scrapbook with Robbie