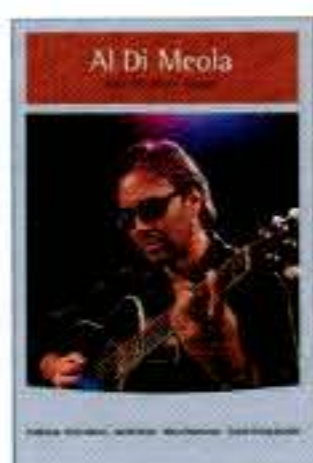


Al Di Meola: One of These Nights ★★★1/2

(2004) 116 min. DVD: \$19.95. Music Video Distributors (avail. from most distributors). Color cover.



Jazz fusion guitarist Al Di Meola met up with outstanding pianist Mario Parmisano, tirelessly inventive drummers Ernie Adams and Gumbi Oritz, and Hungary's Sturcz String Quartet in Germany to record this mesmerizing 11-song concert on May 17, 2004. "Innamorata" opens the show with an earthy yet ethereal instrumental that winds, gathers drama, and peaks in a manner reminiscent of the Mahavishnu Orchestra. "Misterio" finds Di Meola pulling a sitar-like sound out of his instrument, "Azzurra" is a high moment showcasing the string section, "This Way Before" features a twilight duel between guitar and percussion, and "Libertango" underscores Di Meola's taste in the cool passion of Brazilian sounds. A terrific show, presented in Dolby Digital 5.1 and stereo, DVD extras include a "making-of" featurette and a text bio of Di Meola. Highly recommended. Aud: P. (T. Keogh)

Ani DiFranco: Trust

★★★★

(2005) 90 min. DVD: \$19.98. Righteous Babe Records (avail. from most distributors). Color cover.

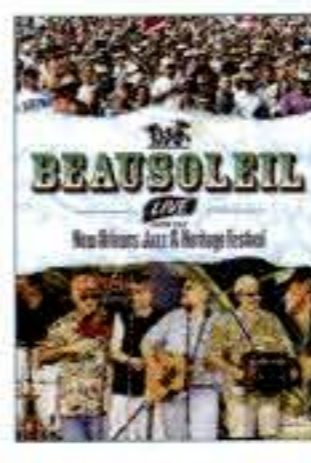


Filmed May 11-12, 2004 at the 9:30 Club in Washington, D.C., *Ani DiFranco: Trust* finds the indie singer/songwriter/poet/guitarist/force of nature (whose fast-and-hard-playing choppy guitar makes U2's Edge sound like Lawrence Welk) putting her entire heart, soul, and body into a blistering 20-song/poem set. Backed by Todd Sickafoose on upright bass and (occasionally) Tony Scherr on guitar, the feminist, activist, and indie founder of Righteous Babe Records waxes philosophical, social, political (there's even a brief appearance by former presidential candidate Dennis Kucinich), and personal on songs spanning a 15-year career, with nearly half coming from her two most recent releases, the double-Grammy nominated *Educated Guess* (2004) and the brand-new *Knuckle Down*. Standout tracks here include "Gravel," "God's Country," "Anticipate," "Swan Dive," "Angry Anymore," "Evolve," "Shameless," and the poem "Grand Canyon." Presented in Dolby Digital 5.1 and stereo, *Ani DiFranco: Trust* will be like manna from musical heaven for the artist's fiercely loyal fans and it will—what's the technical term I'm looking for?—oh yeah, knock-the-knickers-off of anyone catching DiFranco's unique folk-indie-rap sound for the first time. Highly recommended. **Editor's Choice.** Aud: P. (R. Pitman)

BeauSoleil Live

★★★1/2

(2005) 100 min. DVD: \$19.98. Shout! Factory (avail. from most distributors). Color cover. ISBN: 0-7389-2773-2.



Founded in 1975 by fiddler and guitarist Michael Doucet, Cajun music traditionalists BeauSoleil have been much-beloved visitors to the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival for decades. This 12-song 2002 outdoor performance before a happy crowd includes the hypnotic "Happy One-Step" (for which it's impossible to sit still); the haunting ballad "Recherche d'Acadie," about the meaning of home; and "Le Chanky-Chank Francais," with its circular rhythm, gorgeous vocal harmony, and touch of swing. Also on tap: "Grand Mamou," a lovely waltz about a dusty Louisiana town, and "Amédé," a true showstopper about overcoming racism and adversity (in French, of course). At it's best, this music could charm snakes. Presented in Dolby Digital 5.1 sound, DVD extras include an interview with Doucet and other members of the band, and bonus music videos. Highly recommended. Aud: P. (T. Keogh)

Bigg Snoop Dogg's Puff Puff Pass Tour ★★

(2004) 100 min. DVD: \$14.98. Eagle Rock Entertainment (avail. from most distributors). Color cover.

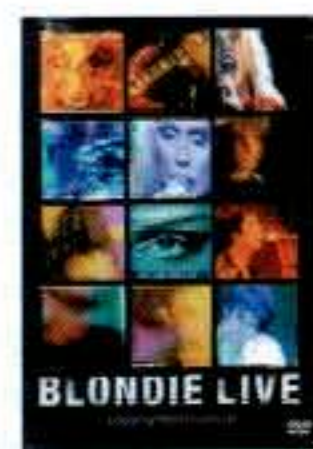


Listen y'all, I'm not playa hatin': I'm a Snoop D.O.-double-G. aficionado from way back in the day fo shizzle, but this music documentary following the rap icon on his 29-city "Puff Puff Pass" concert tour leaves much to be desired. Long Beach-born hip-hop heavyweight Calvin "Snoop Dogg" Broadus offers viewers a behind-the-scenes look at tour life through candid interview segments (including Nate Dogg, Warren G, and "spiritual advisor" Archbishop Don "Magic" Juan), and performance footage of classic tunes—such as "Who Am I (What's My Name)," "Gin & Juice," etc.—from wild, jam-packed shows across the U.S. Make no mistake, however, the experience isn't labeled "Puff Puff Pass" for nothing: much time is spent on Snoop's appreciation for marijuana (regarding the amount of weed smoked on tour, one observer remarks that "the smoke never leaves the air"). In addition to Snoop and his entourage's constant onscreen consumption and praise of pot, the program features various interviewees discussing marijuana's pros and cons (a UCLA doc deems it a "safe drug" compared to others), and even a segment from a San Francisco NORML (National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws) conference. With the profane language, nudity, drugs, and hedonistic/misogynistic lifestyle (the best part of touring:

"the bitches" of course, who are scouted and brought back to the dressing room to "do what they do"), this "Parental Advisory"-tagged title may be crude fun for fans, but it's not a necessary purchase for library collections. Aud: P. (J. Williams-Wood)

Blondie Live ★★★

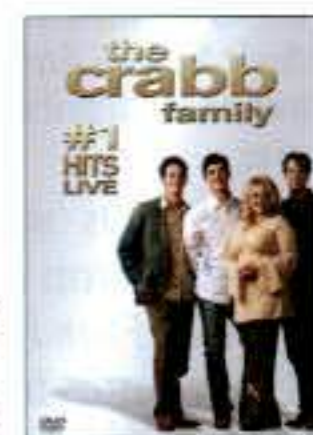
(1999) 65 min. DVD: \$14.98. Eagle Vision (avail. from most distributors). Color cover.



Filmed at NYC's Town Hall on February 10, 1999, late '70s/early '80s punk/New Wave band Blondie performs before an appreciative crowd in their first hometown concert in 17 years. Fronted by signature platinum blonde singer Debbie Harry, the band (including original members Clem Burke, Jimmy Destri, and Chris Stein) serves up 16 tunes altogether, mostly drawn from their third and fourth albums (1978's *Parallel Lines* and 1979's *Eat to the Beat*), as well as their then-current 1999 release *No Exit*. As in the 1979 concert DVD *Blondie* (VL-5/04), the sunglasses-wearing, raincoat-attired Harry looks and sounds a little zombie-ish for the first third of the set, but loosens up physically and vocally as the evening progresses. Hits include "Dreaming," "Shayla/Union City Blue," "Atomic," "Heart of Glass," "Hanging on the Telephone," "Rapture," and "One Way or Another," with the best of the new stuff (in 1999) being the infectious "Maria" and the weird, jazz-inflected "Boom Boom in the Zoom Zoom Room." A decent showcase for the most commercially successful of the early New Wave bands—presented in Dolby Digital 5.1 and stereo—*Blondie Live* also features lyrics, photos, and a bonus music video for "Nothing Is Real But the Girl." Recommended. Aud: P. (R. Pitman)

The Crabb Family: #1 Hits Live! ★★★

(2003) 65 min. DVD: \$14.98. Eagle Eye Media (avail. from most distributors). Color cover.



The musical ministry of the Crabb Family, Kentucky's contribution to Southern singing clans, is showcased in this Dolby Digital 5.1 recorded concert performance celebrating the group's many gospel hits. Highlights in this 14-song set include the upbeat, country-flavored "Jesus In a Song"; "Not Even a Stone," the story of Christ's resurrection, as sung by the Crabb men; the touching testimonial "Please Come Down to Me"; and "Through the Fire," a prose-like, powerhouse tune about redemption. A bit short for a concert DVD, this is nevertheless sure to be appreciated by fans of the group (who've been nominated for over 60 gospel singing awards in five years). Recommended. Aud: P. (T. Keogh)