

line: “but in reality, she doesn’t fooking know me”). Of course, for many viewers, the whole concert will be a blast-down-memory-lane highlight. Presented in DTS-5.1, Dolby Digital 5.1 and stereo on DVD, and DTS-HD 5.1, Dolby Digital 5.1, and LPCM stereo on Blu-ray, extras include a new interview with Jagger, archival ABC News 20/20 interviews with the band, and four *Saturday Night Live* performances. Highly recommended. (R. Pitman)

Styx: The Grand Illusion/ Pieces of Eight—Live

★★★1/2
(2011) 102 min. DVD: \$14.98,
Blu-ray: \$19.98. Eagle Vision
(avail. from most distributors).



Prog-rock band Styx performs two classic albums—1977’s *The Grand Illusion* and 1978’s *Pieces of Eight* (19 songs total)—in this live concert filmed November 9, 2010 at the Orpheum Theater in Memphis, TN. A couple caveats: first, this is not really Styx—the most notable absentee here being distinctively-voiced lead singer/keyboardist Dennis DeYoung, and second, *Pieces of Eight* is only a classic in one sense (old). Those big exceptions aside, two of the band’s mainstays—guitarists/singers Tommy Shaw and James “J.Y.” Young—are on hand, while a third, original bass player Chuck Panozzo, guests on several songs. Déjà vu does not immediately kick in with the opening title cut of *The Grand Illusion* as Lawrence Gowan tries to do his best DeYoung impersonation. Many viewers, however, will feel the warm fuzzies when Shaw steps up to the mic for “Fooling Yourself” and “Man in the Wilderness,” or while Young belts out “Miss America.” But despite all the flashy behind-the-back keyboard playing, Gowan cannot replicate DeYoung’s signature voice on songs like “Come Sail Away” and “Castle Walls.” And the less said about *Pieces of Eight* the better: from its bland opening song—“Great White Hope, which is essentially Young ripping off his own “Miss America”—to the blander instrumental closer “Aku-Aku,” Styx’s much-anticipated follow-up to *Grand Illusion* had little to recommend it beyond two fine Shaw hits (“Blue Collar Man” and “Renegade”). Presented in DTS-5.1, Dolby Digital 5.1 and stereo on DVD, and DTS-HD 5.1, Dolby Digital 5.1, and LPCM stereo on Blu-ray, extras include a behind-the-scenes featurette and a short piece on “Aku-Aku.” Optional. (R. Pitman)

A Tale of Two Cities—In Concert

★★★1/2
(2009) 96 min. DVD: \$19.95.
Tale Productions (avail. from
most distributors).



Les Misérables was the obvious model for Jill Santoriello’s musical adapta-

tion—which had a brief Broadway run in 2008—of Charles Dickens’s famed novel. This concert version, performed before a live audience, includes the majority of the musical numbers, but eliminates most of the linking dialogue, replacing it with narration delivered by actor Michael York. Although the performers appear in costume, no scenery is evident, and the orchestra—conducted by Michael Reed—is seated behind the singers onstage rather than in the pit. The libretto necessarily excises much of the book’s detail, concentrating on the romantic triangle involving French nobleman Charles Darnay (Simon Thomas), lovely Lucie Manette (Brandi Burkhardt), and alcoholic lawyer Sydney Carton (James Barbour), who ultimately sacrifices himself to save his rival from the guillotine when the aristocrat is condemned through the machinations of radical Madame Defarge (Natalie Toro). Unfortunately, Santoriello’s lyrics are more functional than inspired, while her music sounds like second-rate Andrew Lloyd Webber. Barbour easily steals what show there is as the cynical attorney, although Toro fumes and rages to considerable effect as Defarge. By contrast, Burkhardt and Thomas sing well but are wooden and dull presences. DVD extras include two additional songs and an interview with a descendant of Dickens. Connoisseurs of flop musicals may appreciate, but this is otherwise an optional purchase. (F. Swietek)

Twisted Sister: From the Bars to the Stars

★★★1/2
(2011) 5 discs. 490 min. DVD:
\$59.98. Eagle Vision (avail.
from most distributors).

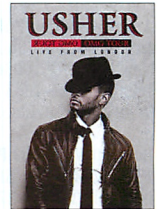


A five-disc set from veteran metal band Twisted Sister may seem like overkill, but fans will probably feel otherwise as they watch this riot of thick riffs, big hair, snug spandex, and bright greasepaint. The Long Island rockers kick off with a 1982 show before a hometown crowd, mounted just two days before they flew to England to record their first album, *Under the Blade*—although, as singer Dee Snider states, they’d already been playing the club circuit for six years. Band members A.J. Pero (drums), Mark Mendoza (bass), Eddie Ojeda (guitar), and Jay Jay French (guitar) crank out the raucous rhythms, while Snider struts, screams, and praises hard-working men and women, combining original hits like “We’re Not Gonna Take It,” “I Wanna Rock,” and “Destroyer” with covers such as “Leader of the Pack” and a speed-metal rendition of “It’s Only Rock ‘n’ Roll (But I Like It).” Other shows include a Reading set from the same year (with Lemmy Kilmister and “Fast” Eddie Clarke from Motörhead joining in), the NY Steel benefit from 2001 (their first Big Apple concert in 13 years), a Wacken gig from 2003, and a Christmas

set from 2009, in Las Vegas. By the 2000s, the boys had toned down their look, but the songs—many performed repetitively in this collection—remained much the same. DVD extras include interviews with the band. Presented in Dolby Digital stereo (with the Wacken segment also featuring a Dolby Digital 5.1 track), this is a strong optional purchase. (K. Fennessy)

Usher: OMG Tour—Live from London

★★★
(2011) 104 min. DVD: \$14.98,
Blu-ray: \$19.98. Eagle Vision
(avail. from most distributors).



R&B star Usher Raymond IV plays mostly to the ladies in this 2011 concert from London’s O2 Arena, part of a tour in support of *Raymond v. Raymond*. After an instrumental fanfare, Usher enters the stage on a riser lowered from the ceiling; like his male dancers, the singer sports the *Mad Max*-type outfits Michael Jackson used to favor (black, studded-leather motorcycle get-ups). By the second song, “She Don’t Know,” the sweat’s flowing, which isn’t surprising, given his forceful, acrobatic dancing, and by the fifth, “U Don’t Have to Call,” he takes off his shirt, revealing his well-toned physique. While the men echo Usher’s moves, the female hoofers provide a more overtly sexual counterpoint, often acting out skits with him during numbers, which alternate between slow and fast. Although Usher doesn’t boast the most original vocal style, his vibrato-laden singing on this solid 19-song set is strong, coming across like a new-school combination of Stevie Wonder and Marvin Gaye. Presented in DTS-5.1, Dolby Digital 5.1 and stereo on DVD, and DTS-HD 5.1, Dolby Digital 5.1, and LPCM stereo on Blu-ray, extras include a featurette on the tour. Recommended. (K. Fennessy)

25 Years Later

Broadway’s longest-running production of all time celebrates a triumphant quarter century on stage in *The Phantom of the Opera at the Royal Albert Hall* (Universal, DVD: \$29.98, Blu-ray: \$39.98), which captures a live performance starring 2011 Olivier Award nominee Ramin Karimloo as the lovestruck Phantom and Sierra Boggess as the beautiful and gifted soprano Christine, along with Hadley Fraser as Raoul (with special guest appearances from the original production’s Phantom and Christine—Tony Award winner Michael Crawford and Sarah Brightman—in a final curtain call that also features composer Andrew Lloyd Webber).

