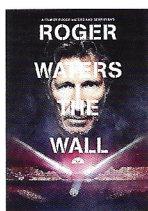


this film capturing Waters's *The Wall Live* tour, which became the highest-grossing solo tour in history. In between performances of songs from Pink Floyd's classic 1979 album, the film inserts scenes of Waters driving through France and Italy while reflecting on the father and grandfather he lost to war. It's like two films in one, with the road trip offering a respite from the busyness of the stage sets that feature animated segments, puppet sequences, and dramatic lighting (11 musicians fill out the sound, including G.E. Smith on guitar). In concert, Waters conjures up the past by singing "Mother" paired to footage of his 1980 self, whom he dismisses as "fucked up little Roger from all those years ago." In France, Waters's adult children join him to visit their great-grandfather's grave site. He also meets up with director Peter Medak, who describes his wartime escape from Hungary (oddly, Waters doesn't identify Medak). There appears to be a twofold goal at work here: to protest the futility of war while also recognizing those who lost their lives to it. A worthy aim, but Waters makes a tactical error when he appears clad in a Gestapo-style trench coat against a red and black background of Fascist imagery as planes appear to dive-bomb the stage. Audience members raise their arms, and it looks like they are at a Nazi rally—the intended effect, but it plays more like endorsement than critique. On the plus side, the Blu-ray release offers a bonus disc with live performances of "Comfortably Numb" and "Outside the Wall" featuring Waters's former band mates David Gilmour and Nick Mason, as well as extra segments. Presented in Dolby Digital 5.1 on DVD, and Dolby TrueHD 7.1 on Blu-ray, extras on both formats include "A Visit to Frank Thompson" (with Waters at the grave of a war hero) and "Time Lapses" (with footage from Athens and Buenos Aires). Sure to be popular, this is recommended, overall. (K. Fennessy)



### Scorpions: Forever and a Day ★★★

(2015) 100 min. In German w/English subtitles. DVD or Blu-ray: \$19.95. MVD Entertainment Group (avail. from most distributors).

After playing music for 50 years and selling 100 million records, the German metal band the Scorpions embark on their final tour in Katja Von Garnier's documentary. Recalling their history while spending 18 months traveling to Thailand, Beirut, and other cities, singer Klaus Meine says he met the brother he never had when he connected with guitarist Rudolf Schenker in Hanover, discovering that they shared similar goals and influences (through much of the decade, Rudolf's brother, Michael, also

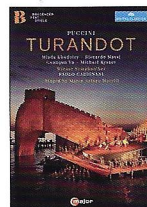


played with the band). Once they filled out their ranks, the Scorpions won a battle of the bands that resulted in a recording contract. Now, the group is a more international affair, with American drummer James Kottak, who joined in 1996, and Polish bass player Pawel Maciwoda, who signed on in 2003. During their farewell tour, the Scorpions also play Moscow, significant because their 1990 song "Wind of Change" struck such a chord that they recorded a version in Russian, which led to a meeting with Gorbachev. The former Soviet Union president remembers, "That was a time when rock gained recognition." If the beginning of the 1990s represented a high, the band soon experienced new lows as their music fell out of fashion, but still they persevered through Meine's throat problems and an ill-fated flirtation with dance music. The singer regrets that they were never as popular in Germany as they were in other countries, such as France, where "Still Loving You" became the country's top-selling single. Other speakers include KISS's Paul Stanley, former drummer Herman Rarebell, and longtime producer Dieter Dierks. Recommended. (K. Fennessy)

### Turandot ★★★

(2015) 125 min. In Italian w/English subtitles. DVD: \$24.99, Blu-ray: \$39.99. C Major/Unite! Classica (dist. by Naxos of America).

Spectacle is often a major selling point in the productions mounted by the Brengenz Festival, with its huge stage at the edge of Lake Constance (facing an arena that seats 7,000). In this 2015 staging by Marco Arturo Marelli of Puccini's final opera, however, the flamboyance is easily matched by an impressive musical performance (with the standard Alfano completion). Fire-juggling acrobats and ninja-like figures (as well as a commedia dell'arte clown) occasionally dart about the stage, which is dominated by a sweeping version of the Great Wall (partially rigged to collapse in an early scene). Among the supernumeraries, moreover, are men who look like terracotta figures, although outfitted in Mao-era suits. That anachronistic touch is characteristic: while most of the Chinese characters are dressed in traditional garb, the hero Calaf—who beats the imperious titular princess at the game of riddles that dooms most of her suitors—is made up to resemble the composer himself in his last days, and the three court ministers likewise wear early-20th-century suits, although sometimes with brightly colored robes. The visual splendor is nicely complemented by excellent vocalism, especially from Riccardo Massi (Calaf), Mlada Khudoley (Turandot), and Guanqun Yu (Liu), as well as strong playing by the Vienna Symphony under Paolo Carignani. Presented in DTS 5.0 and PCM stereo, this

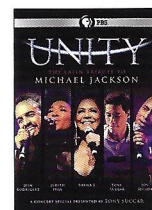


eye-catching, musically vivid rendition is recommended. (F. Swietek)

### Unity: The Latin Tribute to Michael Jackson ★★★

(2015) 60 min. DVD: \$19.99 (\$49.99 w/PPR). PBS Video. SDH captioned. ISBN: 978-1-62789-537-8.

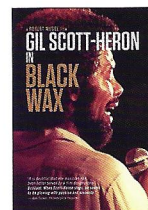
Produced by Peruvian-American musician Tony Succar, this PBS-aired tribute to the hit songs of Michael Jackson as performed by Latin instrumentalists and singers is an unexpected treat, offering lots of musical color and flavor that brings a whole new dimension to familiar music. Shot in a small venue with a large ensemble of players, standout tracks here include Jean Rodriguez's powerful take on "Billie Jean," Kevin Ceballos's spirited cover of "Man in the Mirror" (as well as his playful versions of "Thriller" and "Black or White"), Obie Bermudez and Jennifer Pena's silky, Spanish-language duet on "I Just Can't Stop Loving You," Jon Secada's thoughtful "Human Nature," and India's "Earth Song." Featuring fine vocal work backed by expressive music, *Unity* reworks classic radio pop songs with extended salsa jams and percussion solos. Presented in 5.1 surround sound, this is recommended. (T. Keogh)



### Whole Lotta Mugge

Renowned documentary filmmaker Robert Mugge is showcased with the recent release of two newly restored films that illustrate his talent for capturing music and dance around the world.

**Gil Scott-Heron in Black Wax** (MVD Entertainment Group, DVD or Blu-ray: \$19.95). The spotlight shines on singer-songwriter and hip-hop forefather Gil Scott-Heron in director Robert Mugge's 1982 documentary. Extras include the companion short subject *Is That Jazz?*



**Hawaiian Rainbow & Kumu Hula: Keepers of a Culture** (MVD Entertainment Group, DVD: \$19.95). Inspired by the state's culture and history, director Robert Mugge combined forces with future Hawaiian governor (from 2010-14) Dr. Neil Abercrombie to motivate the Hawaii State Legislature to fund these educational films: 1987's *Hawaiian Rainbow* on music and dance styles, and 1989's *Kumu Hula: Keepers of a Culture*, which explores hula tradition through the generations.

