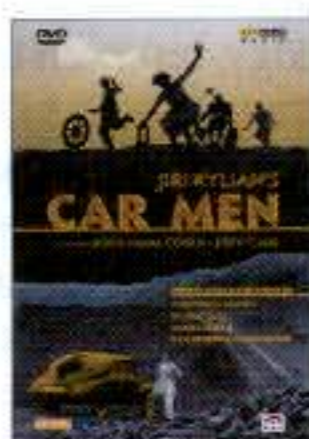


with Ashanti and Jennifer Lopez) in footage that alternates between color and b&w. This hodgepodge approach seems designed either for short attention spans or to make up for the fact that there isn't much of visual interest happening on stage, other than rapping from Ja Rule and Young Life and sampling from an unidentified DJ (along with plenty of drinking and swearing). Increasingly, hip-hop acts are adding live instruments to the mix, and Ja Rule's show could benefit from that sort of an update. In his patter, the MC gives shout-outs to Belgium and Germany, giving at least some indication to locations. Altogether, Ja Rule runs through 20 tracks, including "I Cry," in which Ja Rule (born Jeffrey Atkins) grieves for fallen musical comrades, such as Aaliyah, Tupac Shakur, and Run-DMC's Jam Master Jay. DVD extras include videos from Ja Rule's days with Cash Money Click, four bonus tracks (recorded in Manchester with Ashanti and Charli Baltimore), a radio station tour, and interviews with the rapper (Ja Rule talks about his career, his childhood as a Jehovah's Witness, and his beef with rapper 50 Cent), his hype man, and his bodyguard. Presented in Dolby Digital 5.1 and stereo, this is a strong optional purchase. Aud: P. (K. Fennessy)

Jirí Kylián's Car Men

★★★★

(2006) 61 min. DVD: \$32.98 (booklet included). Arthaus Musik (dist. by Naxos of America). ISBN: 978-3-939873-54-9.

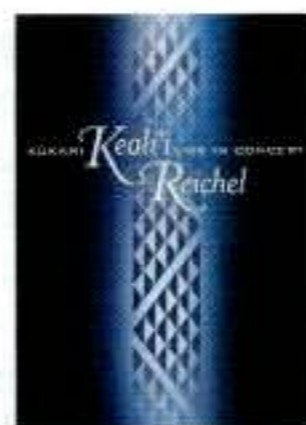


Jirí Kylián's long and distinguished career as choreographer and artistic director of the Nederlands Dans Theater is recognized in this second Arthaus release of his work, which like the first (*Nederlands Dans Theater Celebrates Jirí Kylián*, reviewed in VL-3/08) also features three of his creations. Two are short telefilms dating from the 1980s, both performed on stage and set to the music of Claude Debussy. "La cathédrale engloutie" features two pairs of dancers performing wildly on a beach against the sound of rushing waves, until Debussy's piano piece brings them into a more reflective—even worshipful—attitude. "Silent Cries," set to the famous "Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune," is a solo in which a female dancer struggles to escape confinement from a glass box—a metaphor for self-discovery and liberation. The most recent item is a 2006 film made in collaboration with director Boris Pavel Conen, which recasts the Carmen story as a wildly slapstick tragicomedy involving four scraggly vagrants who cobble together cars from scrap metal they find near an abandoned mine, backed by an adaptation of melodies from Bizet's opera that lend the music a brittle, metallic sound. Taken together, the three pieces exhibit both Kylián's imaginative power and his range, as well as the extraordinary virtuoso demands that his choreography places on performers. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (F. Swietek)

Keali'i Reichel: Kukahi—Live in Concert

★★★★

(2007) 120 min. DVD: \$22.99. Punahale Productions (avail. from most distributors).



A celebration of Hawaiian music and culture, *Keali'i Reichel: Kukahi—Live in Concert*, shot in high-definition video at Honolulu's Blaisdell Center, features the titular 44-year-old musician, teacher, and bestselling artist performing 25 numbers in his mother tongue (the DVD offers both Hawaiian and English subtitles), while video screens project images of sky, sea, and hills. For the nine olis (chants), Reichel wears traditional attire and is joined onstage by the Halau Ke'alaokamaile percussionists and hula dancers (including his mother). For the remaining 16 mele (songs)—a mix of traditional and original—the barefoot musician wears Western clothes and performs with three back-up singers and three guitarists, including his uncle and cousin (yes, this is a true family affair). Spanning over a decade's worth of material, the repertoire touches on fan favorites, like "E O Mai" and "Ka Nohono Pili Kai," while guests include dancer Keali'i Ceballos and singer Ben Vegas, who performs his own "Pua Nani," a heartfelt (if sappy) tribute to his wife. In between songs, Reichel's easygoing patter alternates between English and Hawaiian. Presented in Dolby Digital 5.1 and stereo, DVD extras include a performance with the late Uncle George Holokai at the Maui Arts and Cultural Center, and a short retrospective on Reichel's career. Recommended. Aud: P. (K. Fennessy)

Le Nozze di Figaro

★★★★

(2006) 2 discs. 192 min. In Italian w/English subtitles. DVD: \$45.98 (booklet included). Opus Arte (dist. by Naxos of America).



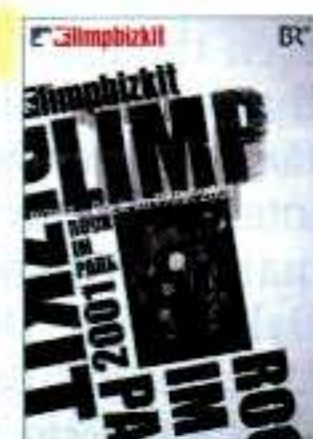
In an accompanying behind-the-scenes featurette, the near-miraculous perfection of Mozart's 1786 comic opera is repeatedly emphasized by members of the cast and director David McVicar, who argue that the particulars of the stage action are actually mandated in the score itself. And *The Marriage of Figaro*—a social critique of *droit du seigneur* (i.e., the purported legal right of the lord of an estate to deflower its virgins) is arguably the greatest of all operas, able to survive even mediocre productions. This mounting, filmed at London's Covent Garden in 2006, is far better than average, but its emphasis on the angry, revolutionary undercurrents of the piece comes at the expense of the opera's charm and humor. Under Antonio Pappano's baton, the orchestral performance is strong but fierce, with the barking brass often dominating both the strings and winds. Also, while

the singing is generally very good, acting choices—the principals are Erwin Schrott, Miah Persson, Gerald Finley, Dorothea Röschmann, and Rinat Shaham—sometimes take precedence over vocalism, so that the voices not only occasionally blare but are even allowed to trail the beat for dramatic effect on occasion. Moreover, the sets and costumes—marked by rather drab, earth-tone colors—further accentuate the sense of seriousness over fun. But while this effort fails to equally capture the myriad facets of Mozart's masterpiece, it nevertheless boasts a reading with a strong point of view that is rigorously realized, backed with fluent (if sometimes busy) camerawork and excellent sound (with DTS and LCPM stereo options), making it one of the better DVD presentations of a much-recorded work. Other DVD extras include an illustrated synopsis and cast gallery. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (F. Swietek)

Limp Bizkit: Rock im Park 2001

★★

(2001) 86 min. DVD: \$19.95. Music Video Distributors (avail. from most distributors).



Rap, hardcore, and metal merge in this 2001 concert featuring Limp Bizkit playing at the Rock im Park festival, held annually in Nuremberg, Germany. Fred Durst does the rapping and singing, while Sam Rivers (bass), John Otto (drums), and Wes Borland (guitar) bring on the noise, and ex-House of Pain turntablist DJ Lethal contributes the scratching and sampling. Here, the Jacksonville, FL quintet look like a regular bunch of guys (Durst sports a baseball cap and baggy pants), except for Borland, who's painted glittery-brown—possibly meant to evoke the title of Bizkit's then-current multi-platinum 2000 CD *Chocolate Starfish and the Hot Dog Flavored Water* (the group opens with the title track). Altogether, they run through 15 tunes, including covers of Metallica's "Master of Puppets," George Michael's "Faith," and Jane's Addiction's "I Would for You," while their originals reference influences ranging from Nine Inch Nails and the Beastie Boys to the Eagles. For "The One," the evening's low point, Durst invites an audience member on stage to dance, then disses her for no apparent reason. All in all, *Limp Bizkit: Rock im Park 2001*, presented in Dolby Digital 5.1 and stereo, is pretty standard stuff—filmed concert-wise—but with more jumping and cussing. Viewers can choose between watching the original TV edit (86 min.) or a truncated remix (74 min.). DVD extras include a casual eight-minute chat with DJ Lethal. This probably won't convert new listeners, but may well appeal to hardcore fans of "nu metal." Optional. Aud: P. (K. Fennessy)