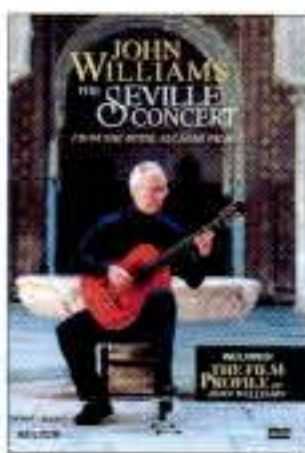


Williams: The Seville Concert ★★★

119 min. DVD: \$24.99. International Films. 0-7697-8454-2.

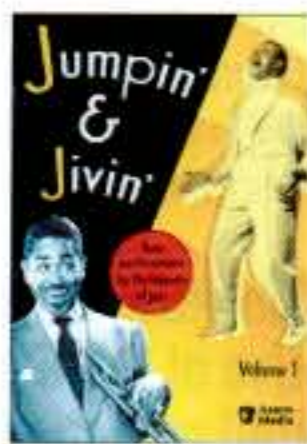
Although he's an understated presence on stage (evinced little emotion as he performs), the Australian-born John Williams—along with Julian Bream—is one of his generation's premier virtuosos on classical guitar, as viewers will discover during a two-hour-long concert filmed (without an introduction) at the beautiful Royal Alcázar Palace in Seville. Most of the performance consists of pieces from Albéniz, Bach, Scarlatti, and Debussy, as well as contemporary compositions by Yocoh and Nikita Koshkin, but there are also two orchestra-backed works—a double concerto and a single movement from Prokofiev's *Concierto de Aranjuez*. The concert is complemented by an hour-long profile of Williams, in which he discusses his life and career with remarkable candor—offering, in addition, some penetrating comments on the teaching style of Andrés Segovia, whom he once studied—while others (musicians, composers, fellow artists, and even a record-maker) discuss Williams' artistry and express their warm personal regard for him. The film also features archival footage of a wide array of musical excerpts. Taken together, the concert and documentary serve as an excellent appreciation of a talented musician. Presented in Dolby Digital stereo, this is highly recommended. Aud: P. (F. Swietek)



Jumpin' & Jivin', Vol. 1 ★★1/2

85 min. DVD: \$19.99. Music Media (avail. from most distributors).

Highly entertaining collection of clips featuring some of the best of jazz and swing's greatest artists from the 1930s, '40s, and '50s. The first volume of *Jumpin' & Jivin'* includes 30 performances, most of them taken from "soundies" (short black-and-white musicals produced for clubs, bars, jukeboxes, etc.) starring giants such as Duke Ellington (the sublime "Sophisticated Lady," with Louis Bellson on drums), Fats Waller ("Misbehavin'"), "Honeysuckle Rose"), Louis Jordan (three delightful clips, including where the saxophonist-singer and his band the Tympany Five are decked out in clown makeup), Dizzy Gillespie ("Oop Bop Sh Bam" is as hip as it gets), Lena Horne ("Unlucky Star," with pianists Albert Ammons and Art Tatum), Billy Eckstine ("Rhythm in a Hand," with a young Art Blakey on the skins, and "So Smooth"), and the Treniers (the riotous "Rock, It's Roll, It's Swing," which is as advertised). Many artists will certainly be familiar to jazz buffs, while others are decidedly obscure (consider yourself an



expert if you're familiar with the likes of Teddy Powell, Will Bradley and his Six Texas Hot Dogs, Al Donahue, or Ralph Flanagan)—but all look and sound great, notwithstanding some occasional hiss and distortion on the ancient audio tracks, and the dancing and clothes are almost as cool as the music, presented here in Dolby Digital stereo. Perhaps equally notable is the presentation: whereas too many collections of this sort are desultory, slapdash affairs lacking such basic information as names, dates, and origins, *Jumpin' & Jivin'* features an informative booklet. A great value, this is highly recommended. Aud: C, P. (S. Graham)

The Legendary Crooners ★★1/2

(2007) 61 min. DVD: \$19.99. SRO (dist. by Kultur International Films). ISBN: 0-7697-8492-5.

Lots of celebrity entertainers insist on being known by their first names, but here are some fellows who've really earned it: Frank, Dean, Nat, Bing, and Perry. Not that this somewhat slipshod collection fully does them justice; there are altogether too many snippets instead of complete performances, and the sources, dates, and other details on many are nowhere to be found. Still, there are some very cool moments: Bing Crosby joined by Louis Armstrong on a version of "Now You Has Jazz" (a different take of the song appeared in the film *High Society*, as did Der Bingle's "True Love"); Bing and Frank Sinatra sharing some relaxed quips while the latter sings "Love and Marriage" and "Baby Won't You Please Come Home"; Dean Martin serving up frivolities like "That's Amore" and "Mambo Italiano"; Nat King Cole, probably the hippest of the bunch, in a music video-like clip for "Frim Fram Sauce" and a conga-voice duet on "Calypso Blues"; Perry Como, Mr. Mild himself, joined by Ann-Margret for "It Might as Well Be Spring"; and guest appearances by Bob Hope, Jack Benny, and Jerry Lewis. These guys, whom we're told sang about "our joys, our great loves, our heartbreaks, our triumphs and our tragedies," set the standard for all sophisticated swingers to come. So even if this DVD (which features adequate Dolby Digital stereo and decent enough transfers of some ancient archival footage) falls well short of brilliance, it remains a strong optional purchase for crooner fans. Aud: P. (S. Graham)



Lucia di Lammermoor ★★★1/2

(1986) 145 min. In Italian w/English subtitles. DVD: \$29.99. Kultur International Films. ISBN: 0-7697-8486-0.

In February 1986, a veritable love fest took place in Sydney, Australia when Dame Joan Sutherland appeared to ecstatic applause in a reprise of her signature role as Lucia di Lam-

mermoor. Backed by the Australian Opera Chorus, the Australian Opera Ballet, and the Elizabethan Sydney Orchestra under conductor Richard Bonyng, this legendary production—filmed live at Sydney Opera as an "Esso Night at the Opera"—has now been restored and re-released on DVD. Donizetti's opera, based on Sir Walter Scott's novel concerning star-crossed lovers of the Ravenswood and Lammermoor families, historically presented insurmountable challenges to most sopranos until 1959, when Sutherland made a breakthrough with her bel canto triumph (featuring a definitive performance of the mad scene that defines the opera). In 1986, a late date in her career, she still merits the epithet "La Stupenda," with her formidable technique and presence (not to mention her ability to fall over backwards on a flight of stairs). Presented in Dolby Digital stereo, the sound is uneven during some of the ensemble pieces and at times the orchestra overwhelms the supporting singers, but this is living history, and despite technical imperfections is still highly recommended. Aud: C, P. (J. Reed)



Maggie Bell and Midnight Flyer: Live Montreux July 1981 ★★

(1981) 90 min. DVD: \$19.95. Music Video Distributors (avail. from most distributors).

Featuring the distinctive voice of Maggie Bell, this 1981 Montreux concert with her band Midnight Flyer captures the chanteuse at a point not far removed from her best years with Stone the Crows and as an in-demand session belter (that's her unforgettable shriek you hear behind Rod Stewart on the fade-out of "Every Picture Tells a Story"). Unfortunately, the performances on this 13-song set (with nearly half the songs drawn from the band's lone eponymous album) seem rather pedestrian, with Bell and her four-piece backup sounding more like a good bar band than a top liner act (even the tracks featuring guests Taj Mahal and Albert Collins never really catch fire). The one redeeming feature of this disc (presented in Dolby Digital 5.0) is a recent interview with Bell, in which she recounts—in her charming Scottish brogue—the good old days of hanging with the rock aristocracy; it's like a little rock 'n' roll history lesson. Even so, this is an optional purchase. Aud: P. (M. Moore)



Megadeth: That One Night—Live in Buenos Aires ★★★1/2

(2005) 95 min. DVD: \$19.99. Image Entertainment (avail. from most distributors).

Argentinean fans at Buenos Aires' Obras Sanitarias stadium treated Megadeth like the