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December '09 Music on DVD

Written by Kevin Filipski

It Might Get Loud (Sony Classics), David Guggenheim's guitar-hero documentary, plays like a summit meeting among three guitarists from three different rock eras-Zeppelin's Jimmy Page, U2's The Edge and the White Stripes' Jack White, each of whom discusses influences, background and personal technique. But the sparks fly most when they come together, strap on their axes and play one another's music. We lucky viewers get to see and hear blistering excerpts from tunes like "In My Time of Dying" and "Get on Your Boots." There is an embarrassment of riches throughout the film's too-short 98-minute running time: an additional 26 minutes of deleted scenes include a three-way performance of "Kashmir," Edge's take on "Stairway to Heaven" and an acoustic Page interlude, none of which amazingly missed the final cut. Other bonus features include Guggenheim's audio commentary and a Toronto Film Festival press conference, as the three guitarists and director have a good time for 38 minutes.



ALSO AVAILABLE...

Arcangels: Living in a Dream is a rollicking reunion concert of the band the formed after Stevie Ray Vaughan's death in 1990 by members of Double Trouble—now, Chris Layton, Doyle Bramhall II and Charlie Sexton still have the spark that propelled their rockin' music back in the day (best extra: reunion documentary); Hector Berlioz's opera about the great Renaissance sculptor, Benvenuto Cellini (Naxos), is seen in an astonishingly wrongheaded 2007 Salzburg Festival production, superbly offset by a fiery Valery Gergiev leading the splendid Vienna Philharmonic and Burkhard Fritz as Cellini; Alfano's Cyrano de Bergerac (Naxos)—based on Edmond Rostand's classic play-has become something of a signature role for Placido Domingo, who dispatches it with vigor if not total conviction in this straightforward staging; Bartok's lone opera, the masterpiece Duke Bluebeard's Castle (Kultur), comes to vivid life in this 1988 BBC film starring Robert Lloyd and Elizabeth Laurence, with Adam Fischer's supple conducting of the London Philharmonic underscoring the riveting drama; Prokofiev's first full-length opera, the psychological character study The Gambler (Kultur), is saddled with a one-note, one-set Berlin staging in 2008—happily, Daniel Barenboim leads the Staatskapelle Berlin's exceptional musicians and a first-rate cast led by Misha Didyk and Kristine Opolais; Offenbach's Hoffmans Erzalungen (Tales of Hoffmann) (Naxos), shown in this rare 1970 color film from East Germany that's directed by Walter Felsenstein, stars the superb German singer Hanns Nocker; the biographical documentary In Search of Mozart (Microcinema) distills the great composer's life, music and legacy into a mere two-plus hours; Johnny Mercer: The Dream's on Me (Warners) recounts the music of one of pop's most prolific songwriters-whose hits include "Moon River" and "Hooray for Hollywood"-on the 100th anniversary of his birth (extra: performances of Mercer's songs by Audra MacDonald, Michael Feinstein and Dr. John); Verdi's perennial classic opera La Traviata (Qualiton) is given an absorbing treatment in Liege, France early this year stars riveting soprano Cinzia Forte as tragic heroine Violetta; a remarkable historical document, The Who The Mods and the Ouadrophenia Connection (MVD) sends viewers on a tour of the underground culture in which The Who made its seminal rock opera, Quadrophenia, with fresh and insights interviews and footage of the band at the height of its peak (best extra: additional interviews).

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