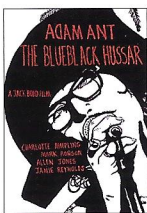


Adam Ant: The Blueblack Hussar ★★

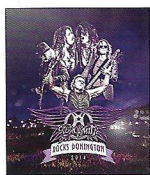
(2015) 99 min. DVD: \$24.95. Music Video Distributors (avail. from most distributors).



Many with long memories of the New Romantics period of British pop music in the 1980s—or of the early days of music videos on MTV—may recall the swaggering, playful presence of Adam Ant (“Goody Two Shoes”), whose personal story turns out to be rather horrific. He was “sectioned” (i.e., detained under England’s Mental Health Act) three times for bipolar disorder, derailing his career, and costing him some 15 years. Veteran filmmaker Jack Bond’s documentary centers on the artist’s return from the wilderness a few years ago, as he goes on a tour of small venues in the U.K., reacquaints himself with audiences, gives interviews, and connects with various random celebrities (including actress Charlotte Rampling, and producer-musician Mark Ronson). Sadly, however, most of the film is deadly dull, a fly-on-the-wall look at not much at all besides Adam Ant holding forth about life and music while wearing a hat well-suited for a 19th-century British naval officer. Little is revealed here except that the 58-year-old musician has many opinions, and a sense of humor, and the sparse footage of him in performance is hampered by poor-quality audio. Presented in stereo, extras include bonus live performances (including one with Boy George) and a Q&A with Bond and journalist John Robb. Antmusic fanatics may appreciate, but for most this is an optional purchase. (T. Keogh)

Aerosmith Rocks Donington 2014 ★★★

(2014) 105 min. DVD: \$29.98, Blu-ray: \$34.98 (two audio CDs included). Eagle Rock Entertainment (avail. from most distributors)

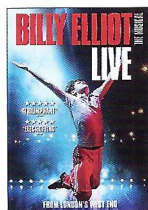


With the exception of touring keyboard player Buck Johnson, the original Aerosmith members are well into their 60s, but they rock as hard as ever in this 2014 concert at the Download Festival in Leicestershire’s Donington Park. If anything, the band plays as if it has something to prove, possibly because the festival attracted a younger demographic. Consequently, instead of opening with the 1970s hits that made their reputation, the band jumps ahead to songs from their 1980s resurgence, such as “Love in an Elevator.” On the down side, “Dude (Looks Like a Lady)” has not aged well, especially in light of the strides LGBT people have made since the song’s release (what might have been intended as a jokey update on the Kinks’ “Lola” now seems particularly insensitive). On the plus side, however, lead singer Steven Tyler continues to look and sound ageless, although it’s too bad that he resorts to lame

croch grabs and sexist commentary (adding insult to injury, the program also features clips of the band preparing for the show, including a groupie-filled sequence with Tyler). Those quibbles aside, the band’s 20-song set includes many fan favorites, such as “Walk This Way,” “Sweet Emotion,” “I Don’t Want to Miss a Thing,” and “Dream On.” And guitarist Joe Perry even gets the chance to sing on “Freedom Fighter” from 2012’s *Rock from Another Dimension*. Bundled with two audio CDs, this is presented in Dolby Digital 5.1 and stereo on DVD, and DTS-HD 5.1 and LPCM stereo on Blu-ray. Sure to be popular, this is recommended. (K. Fennessy)

Billy Elliot: The Musical Live ★★★½

(2014) 170 min. DVD: \$22.98, Blu-ray: \$26.98. Universal Studios Home Entertainment (avail. from most distributors).

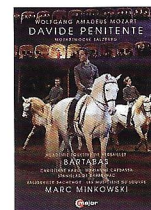


Mounted by the same team that created the hit 2000 film *Billy Elliot*—including writer Lee Hall and director Stephen Daldry—*Billy Elliot: The Musical Live*, winner of 10 Tony awards (including Best Musical) and now celebrating the 10th year of its run, is presented in this 2014 performance from London’s Victoria Palace Theatre. Set in 1984-85 during the British coal miner’s strike that pitted U.K. prime minister Margaret Thatcher’s Conservative government against the National Union of Mine Workers, the musical centers on one boy who trades boxing gloves for ballet shoes, suffering the scorn of his older brother and his father, both coal miners, while being encouraged by the ghost of his deceased mother. In what is likely the most physically demanding role for a child in contemporary theatre, 11-year-old Elliott Hanna is astonishing as Billy, dancing up a kinetic storm in a variety of styles, including tap, modern, and ballet, while also turning in a compelling, heartfelt performance. Hanna is ably backed by Ruthie Henshall as the small-town ballet class instructor who sees Billy’s potential; Deka Walmsley as Billy’s tortured dad, who ultimately wants the best for his son; Ann Emery as Billy’s senile Grandma; and Zach Atkinson as Billy’s best friend, Michael. Featuring the music of Elton John (with lyrics by Hall), the show boasts a number of fine songs, including the beautiful “The Stars Look Down,” the stirring anthem “Solidarity,” the touching “Grandma’s Song,” the caustic “Merry Christmas, Maggie Thatcher,” and the comic cross-dressing number “Expressing Yourself.” A special treat here is the appearance of Liam Mower (the first stage Billy) in a dance scene with Hanna as the latter imagines his future graceful self (a rousing encore also features two dozen past and present Billys). Although some might balk at the profanity spouted by pre-teens in the show—much of it played

for laughs—*Billy Elliot* is ultimately a big-hearted, spirit-lifting musical. Presented in Dolby Digital 5.1 on DVD, and DTS-HD 5.1 and Dolby Digital stereo on Blu-ray, extras include an introduction and set tour by Hanna, and a behind-the-scenes featurette with cast and crew. Highly recommended. (R. Pitman)

Davide Penitente ★★★

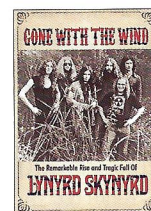
(2015) 73 min. In Italian w/ English subtitles. DVD: \$24.99, Blu-ray: \$39.99. C Major (dist. by Naxos of America).



A rarely performed Mozart piece is showcased in this unusual 2015 Mozart-piece (Mozart Week) presentation from Salzburg. The work itself is a cantata composed in 1785 for the Vienna Society of Musicians, while the text is derived from an Italian translation of the Psalms attributed to King David. But except for two elaborate new arias, the music simply recycles the eight sections of the two completed portions—the Kyrie and Gloria—of Mozart’s otherwise unfinished *Mass in C minor*. Although the placement of performers on different levels at the rear of the stage leads to some slight coordination problems, the cantata is beautifully performed by three excellent soloists—soprano Christiane Karg, mezzo-soprano Marianne Crebassa, and tenor Stanislas de Barbeyrac. And the Salzburger Bachchor, accompanied by the original-instrument group Les Musiciens du Louvre, play with great finesse under conductor Marc Minkowski. What sets this performance apart is the locale: the Salzburg Felsenreitschule (Riding School)—a stonewall structure previously used for opera productions, but here reverting to its original purpose as members of the Académie équestre de Versailles, under their leader Bartabas, ride their steeds in varied formations across the sand-covered stage in tandem with the music. Presented in DTS 5.1 (DTS-HD 5.1 on the Blu-ray release) and PCM stereo, extras include Minkowski’s reading of Mozart’s *Adagio and Fugue in C minor*. A one-of-a-kind production that should appeal to fanciers of horsemanship and/or Mozart rarities, this is recommended. (F. Swietek)

Gone with the Wind: The Remarkable Rise and Tragic Fall of Lynyrd Skynyrd ★★★

(2015) 163 min. DVD: \$19.95. Music Video Distributors (avail. from most distributors). Closed captioned.



Tom O’Dell’s documentary about Lynyrd Skynyrd begins with a look at front man Ronnie Van Zant, who grew up in rural Florida and considered a career in sports until he caught a concert by the Rolling Stones, which inspired him to form a band with high