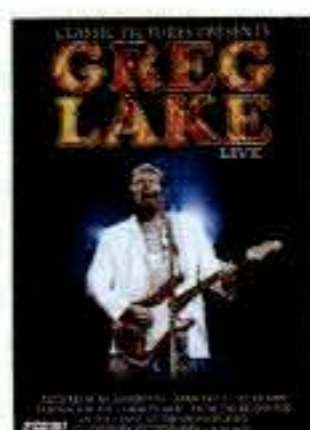


recordings—such as the wonderful rendition of “Pills and Soap” with the Brodsky Quartet. The BQ also accompany Elvis on three other songs—two from their collaborative CD *The Juliet Letters*; the third an inspired reading of the Beach Boys’ “God Only Knows”—while everyone joins in on the moody “Upon a Veil of Midnight Blue” (which Costello would later record for his 2006 CD *My Flame Burns Blue*) and the rousing “Shipbuilding.” A fine concert that finds the ever-adventurous Elvis stretching in a wide variety of musical directions, this is highly recommended. [Note: also newly available on DVD is *Elvis Costello/The Brodsky Quartet: The Juliet Letters*.] Aud: P. (R. Pitman)

Greg Lake Live ★★★

(2005) 2 discs. 105 min. DVD: \$24.99. Image Entertainment (avail. from most distributors).

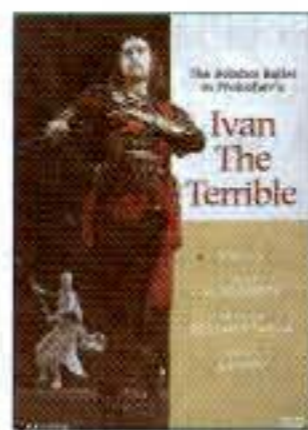


“Welcome back my friends to the show that never ends.” Although turning 60 this year, bass player Greg Lake of ‘70s prog-rock supergroup Emerson, Lake & Palmer (and King Crimson, before that) still boasts a powerful voice in this concert from his 2005 European tour with the Greg Lake Band, featuring David Arch on keyboards, young guitar virtuoso Florian Ophale on guitar, Trevor Barry on bass, and Brett Morgan on drums. Opening with “In the Court of the Crimson King” (the only other King Crimson track is “21st Century Schizoid Man”), Lake performs a solid mix of ballads (such as the early ELP hit “From the Beginning,” the 90s-era ELP tune “Footprints in the Snow,” and Lake’s own “I Believe in Father Christmas”) and extended pieces (including the lovely “Take a Pebble,” with Ophale dexterously performing Keith Emerson’s piano/synth parts on guitar; and “Karn Evil 9—1st Impression, Part 2”). An ill-advised cover of Bob Dylan’s “Love You Too Much” is the only 12-bar blues piece here, and that’s one too many (in fact, this slot could have been very nicely filled by the absent “Still...You Turn Me On”), but for legions of ELP fans, all is forgiven when the band breaks into the signature “Pictures at an Exhibition.” The crowd also warms to a piece Lake wrote at the age of 12 that eventually was used as last-minute filler on ELP’s eponymous debut album: a little song called “Lucky Man.” Presented in DTS, Dolby Digital 5.1 and stereo, this double-disc release features a fine set of extras, including the 45-minute documentary *Welcome Backstage* (with rehearsal performances of a half-dozen songs), another behind-the-scenes featurette with band interviews, and a performance of “I Believe in Father Christmas” in London’s St. Bride’s Church with guest Ian Anderson of Jethro Tull fame. [Note: *Welcome Backstage* is also being released as a standalone DVD by Music Video Distributors priced at \$19.98,

but it makes far more sense to spend the extra five bucks for *Greg Lake Live*.] Aud: P. (R. Pitman)

Ivan the Terrible ★★★

(1976) 91 min. DVD: \$19.99. Kultur International Films. ISBN: 0-7697-8544-1.



Inspired by the life of the 16th-century Russian ruler Ivan IV, Sergei Prokofiev’s (1891-1953) titular music was composed in the 1940s as a background score for Russian filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein’s famous two-part film about the leader who first assumed the title of Czar. But ever since, admirers have sought to rescue it from that subsidiary role, making it—for instance—the basis for a couple of oratorio-like works. Here, with a few additions incorporated from Prokofiev’s score for Eisenstein’s *Alexander Nevsky*, the music serves as foundation for a ballet about the machinations at Ivan’s court, choreographed by Yuri Grigorovich. *Ivan the Terrible* boasts the spikiness, power, and bursts of warmth that characterize all of Prokofiev’s music, and it’s played decently here by the orchestra of Moscow’s Bolshoi Theatre, whose *corps de ballet* copes effortlessly with Grigorovich’s athletic demands, as do the stars—Yuri Vladimirov as Ivan, Natalia Bessmertnova as Anastasia, and Boris Akimov as Kurbsky. Captured with supple camerawork, and featuring ornate sets and costumes, this widescreen color Mosfilm production is an exemplary treatment. Despite a transfer that’s a mite muddy and Dolby Digital stereo that doesn’t truly capture the richness of the orchestrations, this is still recommended. Aud: C, P. (F. Swietek)

The Jesus Lizard ★

(1994) 65 min. DVD: \$16.95. Music Video Distributors (avail. from most distributors).



Forget aesthetics, production values, or even intelligible lyrics. You won’t find them in this October 1994 concert featuring ‘90s Chicago punkers The Jesus Lizard at Boston’s Venus de Milo club. What you do get is the spectacle of frontman David Yow sucking down oodles of beer, seemingly spitting on every downbeat, and repeatedly hurling his increasingly disheveled self into the audience (Yow, perspiring up a storm as he belches out the lyrics and between-songs patter, generally looks like one of those drunks you see in the con-course during a pro wrestling event, trying to pick a fight). Unimaginative videography and muddy audio (Dolby Digital 5.1 sound notwithstanding) don’t help matters either during the 15-song set, or the five bonus tracks from an August 1992 show at CBGB (which includes the ditty “My Own Urine”). Not recommended. Aud: P. (M. Moore)

Larry Coryell: A Retrospective (A Sequel to His Story) ★★★1/2

(2005) 2 discs. 180 min. DVD: \$19.95. Music Video Distributors (avail. from most distributors).



Larry Coryell is a great guitarist, as well as a jazz-rock fusion pioneer, so why—over the course of a four-decades long career—hasn’t he enjoyed the popularity and commercial success of players like John McLaughlin, Al Di Meola, and Pat Metheny? Daniel Mesa, who wrote the liner notes for this two-disc set, suggests several factors: “poor representation, his inability to be held to one specific genre, or quite simply, fate turning its ugly head.” All good possibilities, but the truth is that some of Coryell’s wounds have been self-inflicted—few of his dozens of records stand out, and all the genre-hopping (straight jazz, fusion, New Age-y acoustic, and so on) suggests versatility, yes, but also an inability to musically define himself. This three-hour two-disc package (the bonus disc contains lots of rehearsal footage and interview material), presenting a concert recorded in 2005 in Los Angeles, covers the good, the bad, and the ugly over the course of a dozen-plus-song set. At his best (like “Half a Heart” and “Dragon Gate”), Coryell writes tunes with appealing melodies that combine jazz and rock elements to brilliant effect, and he’s also a fine blues player (“Slow Blues” finds him trading licks with Los Lobos guitarist David Hidalgo). Not so hot are the moments when he reverts to the sloppy, as-many-notes-as-fast-as-possible excess of his younger days, and as for his singing...let’s just say it’s not his strength. His band here includes his son Julian on guitar (his tone and style suggest a jazzier Duane Allman), along with legendary drummer Bernard “Pretty” Purdie, and electric bass player John Hart—the latter duo making for a funky, R&B-flavored rhythm section (James Valentine of Maroon 5 also sits in on guitar). Presented with excellent Dolby Digital 5.1 sound, this is a strong optional purchase. Aud: P. (S. Graham)

Lohengrin ★★★1/2

(2006) 3 discs. 279 min. In German w/English subtitles. DVD: \$49.99 (booklet included). Opus Arte (dist. by Naxos of America).



Richard Wagner’s 1850 masterpiece is the culmination of his “middle period,” preceded by his four “early” operas and the more mature *The Flying Dutchman* and *Tannhäuser*, and followed directly by the *Ring* cycle. In this production, recorded at the Festspielhaus Baden-Baden in June 2006, the tale of the love between Elsa, the Brabantine heiress treacherously accused of murdering her brother, and the mysterious knight (Lohengrin) who becomes her champion, is denuded