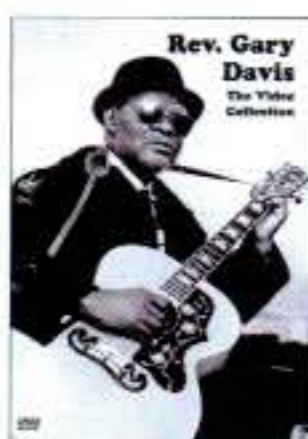


a concert celebrating Hitler's birthday is notorious (Ronald Harwood's play *Taking Sides* dramatizes his case). But it's Furtwängler's orchestra that is the focus of this fine documentary, which combines archival materials (including photos and rare film footage) with extensive interviews of surviving players and the children of others, to investigate the question of whether the group was a compliant Nazi propaganda tool. Viewers will learn about the musicians—such as violinist Szymon Goldberg and cellist Joseph Schuster, who emigrated to America—some of whom were committed Nazis, but for the most part the interviewees argue that the members were musicians first and foremost, and largely apolitical. Still, there's a disquieting character to many of the remarks (when the musicians admit to feeling shame, it's usually because they were exempted from military duties, for example). Aficionados will prize the clips of the orchestra being conducted by such figures as Hans Knappertsbusch, Erich Kleiber, and Sergiu Celibidache, and a bonus clip features a complete performance of Wagner's *Meistersinger* prelude under Furtwängler—precious even with dated newsreel sound. Overall, however, what makes Enrique Sánchez Lansch's *The Reichsorchester* stand apart is the fact that it raises serious questions about the artist's role within a morally indefensible regime. Highly recommended. Aud: C, P. (F. Swietek)

Rev. Gary Davis: The Video Collection ★★★

(2008) 105 min. DVD: \$24.95. Stefan Grossman's *Guitar Workshop*. ISBN: 1-57940-869-9.

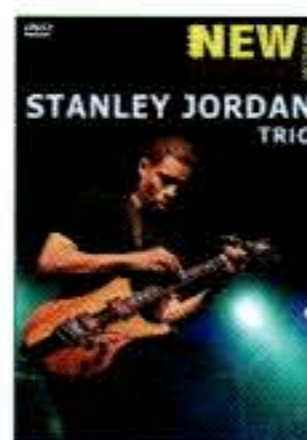


Born in 1896, Reverend Gary Davis was a hugely influential finger-style guitarist: his style and compositions can be heard in recordings by the Grateful Dead ("Samson and Delilah"), Jorma Kaukonen and Hot Tuna ("Death Don't Have No Mercy"), and Bob Dylan, among others. Davis, who was blind, was also well known as a teacher, with students including noted guitarist Stefan Grossman, compiler of the 31 performances included in this collection. It's a no-frills enterprise—no interviews, no testimonials, no biographical information, just music, with tracks grouped together according to time (from the mid-'60s to 1970) and circumstance (ranging from TV and film appearances to informal recitals in folks' living rooms). Nor is there anything high-tech, high-res, or hi-def about these recordings; indeed, the visual quality of the final six tracks in particular is extremely poor. But the power of Davis' playing and singing comes through loud and clear. Picking the strings of his 6- and 12-string acoustic guitars with his thumb and forefinger, he plays a combination of ragtime, country, folk, gospel, and blues styles, and while it may sound rather rough and primitive, his technique is

in fact remarkably sophisticated and difficult. He also has a powerful, guttural vocal sound (heard to good effect on "Oh Glory How Happy I Am," performed on Pete Seeger's *Rainbow Quest* TV show, with a sullen and self-conscious Donovan sitting to one side while Seeger gamely tries to accompany the Rev). Whether or not the Rev. Gary Davis (who died in 1972) was "as important to the acoustic guitar as Andres Segovia was to the Spanish guitar" may be argued, but he was unquestionably a unique and pioneering artist. Recommended. Aud: P. (S. Graham)

Stanley Jordan Trio: New Morning—The Paris Concert ★★★

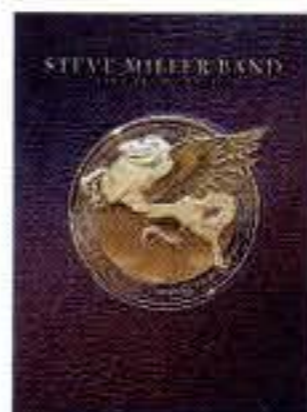
(2007) 127 min. DVD: \$19.95. Music Video Distributors (avail. from most distributors).



Recorded in 2007 at Paris' New Morning months before the release of his *State of Nature* album, guitar virtuoso Stanley Jordan—joined by David Haynes on drums and longtime sideman Charnett Moffett on stand-up bass—performs 12 numbers drawn from the genres of jazz, pop, and classical. The show kicks off with a solo version of the Beatles' "Yesterday" and closes with the fusion-oriented "Return Expedition" from 1985's *Magic Touch*, with in-between highlights including the fast-paced original "A Place in Space" and a dreamy rendition of Horace Silver's "Song for My Father." While Haynes and the sweat-stained Moffett take a break, Jordan performs an improvised excerpt from Bela Bartok's "Concerto for Orchestra, Second Movement" on guitar and Mozart's "Piano Concerto #21, Second Movement" on piano. For fans disappointed by Jordan's forays into funk and watered-down soul during the 1980s and 1990s, *New Morning—The Paris Concert* represents a refreshing return to form, as no synthesizers or drum machines distract from the musician's fluid, finger-tapping technique. Presented in DTS, Dolby Digital 5.1 and stereo, DVD extras include an interview with Jordan. Recommended. Aud: P. (K. Fennessy)

Steve Miller Band: Live from Chicago ★★★

(2007) 2 discs. 110 min. DVD: \$34.99 (bonus CD included). Coming Home Media (avail. from most distributors).



Aging rock stars on the golden oldies circuit know the drill: give 'em an hour-plus-change barrage of the hits sprinkled with a few back-in-the-day reminiscences followed by the band's signature song encore and then scoot back to the hotel for Geritol and Letterman. Apparently, no one told Steve Miller (aka the Space Cowboy, Gangster of Love, Maurice, etc.), who partied like it was 1976 before an appreciative crowd at Chicago's Ravinia Amphitheater

for this near-two-hour 2007 concert that opens with a 14-minute version of "Fly Like an Eagle" (featuring a new rap section by keyboardist Joseph Wooten). Blues/rock guitarist Miller is in mighty fine form here, ably backed by harmonica virtuoso (and longtime collaborator) Norton Buffalo, guitarist Kenny Lee Lewis, bassist Billy Peterson, and drummer Gordy Knudtson on a 20-song set that not only features Miller's string of '70s hits ("Rock 'n Me," "Take the Money and Run," "The Joker," "Swingtown," "Jungle Love," and "Jet Airliner," among others), but some excellent blues tunes as well (including Jimmie Vaughan's "Boom Bapa Boom," K.C. Douglas' "Mercury Blues"—with a great Buffalo harp solo—and the Robert Johnson classic "Crossroads"), all presented with crystal clear DTS surround or stereo sound options. It's fair to say that Miller works in a fairly narrow groove (some of his songs use very similar chord structures—kinda like the ubiquitous bass runs at the heart of many a blues tune), but he's not only a master of his material but also still pretty darn nimble on the ax, and fans will love this trip down memory lane with the famed balladeer who still speaks of the pompatus of love. DVD extras include a bonus disc with two featurettes (roughly 45 minutes total) in which Miller visits his old Chicago haunts in the company of local radio personality Joel Selvin, and a photo montage set to "Winter Time," as well as a 12-track music CD with songs from the concert. Highly recommended. Editor's Choice. Aud: P. (R. Pitman)

Turandot ★★★1/2

(1983) 139 min. DVD: \$32.98 (booklet included). TDK (dist. by Naxos of America).



Opera fans should rejoice over the DVD debut of this stunning filmed performance of the Vienna State Opera's 1983 production of *Turandot*. Conceived for the stage by Broadway musical director Harold Prince, this iridescent interpretation of the Puccini opera unfolds with a visceral intellectual and spiritual energy. The production design is innovative: the antiquated Oriental approach of so many mountings of *Turandot* is here replaced with a location-neutral but style-rich environment that boldly reaffirms the universality of the story, while the cast wear elaborate masks and glittering costumes that ultimately enhance the raw emotions of this tale of loyalty, cruelty, and love. Blessed with extraordinary performances by Jose Carreras as Calaf (who performs what might be the definitive version of the aria "Nessun dorma!"), Katia Ricciarelli as the doomed Liu, and Eva Marton as the evil titular princess—all backed by the Chor und Orchester der Wiener Staatsoper under the baton of Lorin Maazel—this *Turandot* (presented in LCPM stereo) is outstanding. Highly recommended. Aud: C, P. (P. Hall)