

MC5: KICK OUT THE JAMS ★★★★★

ROCKERS: 25th ANNIVERSARY EDITION ★★★★★½

THE SPENCER DAVIS GROUP: GIMME SOME LOVIN' ★★★★★½

Three fine recent releases from the small but discerning Music Video Distribution company. "MC5: Kick Out the Jams" is a mind-blowing tribute to the musical shock troops of the '60s rock underground. Leni Sinclair, wife of MC5 manager/White Panther leader John Sinclair, filmed the Detroit rockers in numerous performances at their peak in the late '60s in this 35-minute compilation of mega-amped sonic assaults including "Kick Out the Jams," "Rocket Reducer No. 62" and "Motor City is Burning." The live audio doesn't necessarily match the live performances, but you won't be looking for lip-synch errors because conceptual artist/anti-rock band Destroy All Monsters founder Cary Loren has mixed the rare performances with protest footage, Vietnam War footage and kaleidoscopic video special effects that transform the disc into an adrenaline-pumping psychedelic freakout. The MC5 is one of those groups that paved the way for punk, but "Kick Out the Jams" makes it clear the Five could have blown the Sex Pistols off the stage any day. The 25th-anniversary edition of "Rockers," a tougher take on Trenchtown life than the better-known "The Harder They Come," is worth celebrating just because we have another chance to see Rasta man Horsemouth (Leroy Wallace) righteously retrieve his motorcycle from the local "Mafia boy" that ripped him off -- with lots of breaks for killer tunes from Gregory Isaacs, Burning Spear, Robbie Shakespeare and the like. The deluxe DVD also features commentary from writer/director Ted Bafaloukos, a cool poster gallery and, best of all, a Rassta patois glossary for those who need help translating the dialogue even with subtitles. "The Spencer Davis Group" is a black-and-white Finnish TV performance by the group in 1966 featuring the 18-year-old keyboard player and vocalist Stevie Winwood. The eight-song set includes raw, live renditions of "Gimme Some Lovin'" and "I'm a Man." Simply amazing. By the following year, when a German crew caught up with the Davis Group at the Marquee Club in London for the documentary "With Their New Face On," which rounds out the disc, Winwood had moved on to form Traffic -- and the difference is a terrible thing to witness. (BI) (In stores now.)

- Bruce Ingram