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## Rolling Stones - Mick Vs. Keith: The Strange Case Of Jagger & Richards

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Review by [Ryan Keefer](#) | posted March 26, 2013 | [E-mail the Author](#)

**The Movie:**

Marriages, boyfriends and girlfriends may come and go, but at least when it comes to The Rolling Stones, band mates appear to be forever. Singer Mick Jagger and guitarist Keith Richards are arguably the best creative duo in rock history and have known each other for six decades now. Sometimes they have gotten along swimmingly. And other times less so, particularly when Richards' past of drug abuse and Jagger's aspirations of a solo career increased tension among the two. The Jagger-Richards history is explored in the appropriately titled *Mick vs. Keith: The Strange Case of Jagger & Richards*, an unauthorized look at their respective histories.



NOTE: It is at this point that I will note that this package is not a multi-disc set that focuses on the relationship of the two. Rather, it is a packaged set of two previous unauthorized documentaries on the two musicians, specifically *The Roaring 20s*, which examines Jagger's influences and work during that period in his life, and *Keith Richards Under Review*, which looks at Richards from his youth to present day on a much longer arc. Complicating things are the rumors that *Under Review* is basically a repackaged version of *The Human Riff*, a Richards doc of similar runtime and extras that I have not seen. If you are familiar with either (or both) of these films, feel free to move on as you see fit. For others, move along, nothing to see here.

There are two keys when it comes to unauthorized documentaries like this, the first is that the lack of participation may itself to some speculation on how things happened on an event or two. But the other more important one is how familiar one may be with the subject is likely how entertaining that may find said documentaries. As one who knows the broad strokes of the Jagger-Richards collaboration and of the Stones history in general, I personally found the documentaries enjoyable for the various aspects they cover. For instance, the Jagger feature in covering the period from 1962-1972, examines his work during the era past the studios and concerts, with his film work and solo material to be more specific. The Richards documentary perhaps unknowingly uses this time as one of the things that led to the Mick and Keith problems of the '70s and '80s, as Richards thought doing solo material was a betrayal of sorts to the band. These moments of synergy between both films are subtle yet nice to call back to.

With the Richards feature, looking at more of his life and work with Jagger, combined with Richards' personal problems, the film also looks at the music critically and structurally. Richards' own foray into solo work late in his career is also delved into, and the overall feeling that the pendulum of charisma has swung from Jagger to Richards is touched upon too. Both films use a mix of interview footage from their subjects (likely public domain film) along with interviews from writers like Anthony DeCurtis of "Rolling Stone," Chris Welch of "Melody Maker" and other journalists, biographers and music historians to do their best to fill in the blanks that Jagger and Richards were unable or unwilling to provide.



If there is one thing that this set on Mick and Keith lacks, it is more stuff about Mick and Keith. Sure, tying one thing from one documentary into the other documentary is nice, but those moments tend to feel a little fleeting, particularly when these discs run almost four hours in length. When you use a documentary that focuses on one subject for most of it without devoting substantial time to the other part of this equation

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(as Jagger and Richards would presumably be), there is going to be a natural vacancy there. Moreover, trying to make up for it by spending a period of time on it in the other piece certainly will not make up for it when you have several hours of film to pore over and no involvement from the people said film is discussing. So in sum, *Mick vs. Keith* could have been better spent by focusing on Mick vs. Keith.

If anything, that is the lasting memory of this *Mick vs. Keith* set for me. While there is inherent time spent looking at the on again, off again partnership and friendship of the two, it is a small percentage of what the focus is, and that is a bit of a problem. Like the Jagger-Richards collaboration which may seemingly go on forever and provide hours of enjoyment, this set's incompleteness is also a legacy that will last awhile.

**The Discs:**  
**Video:**

Both features are presented in 4:3 full frame and juggle an amload of footage in the process. There are the films, whether they are [Gimme Shelter](#) or a variety of concert films, vintage interview footage with the subjects, or perhaps a newsreel or two sprinkled in for good measure. The various reporter/writer/acquaintance interviews all look fine and naturally reproduced, without a hint of edge enhancement or haloing. The discs were pretty much what I thought they would look like.

**Audio:**

Stereo sound across both discs. Honestly, I was not expecting to be blown away by the sonic quality of almost four hours of unauthorized documentary, and I was not. Dialogue sounds consistent through the many interviews conducted for both subjects, and the numerous snippets of music, whether it is recorded in studio or live, all sound clear as a bell. There are no prolonged bouts of chirping or hissing that may plague the features, and they both sound as good as they will likely be.

**Extras:**

Not really all that much; the Jagger disc has an additional interview (6:50) with the band's onetime personal assistant and the Richards disc has one (5:30) with a friend of Keith's. The Richards disc has "The Hardest Interactive Keith Richards Quiz in the World Ever" which is not all that interactive, and both discs have biographical information on the contributors of each disc and any relevant links to their work.

**Final Thoughts:**

*Mick vs. Keith* is a fascinating idea worth examining, and the unauthorized interview subjects try to make it so, but without a predominant focus on the subject, watching both discs feels more like flirting than full penetration. Technically, the discs look and sound about what you would expect them to look at sound. From a bonus material perspective, the filmmakers left everything in the film with very little additional stuff here. If you are new to the Stones it is worth checking out, because it catches up on other aspects of the band nicely. But if you want more hearty fare on the subjects themselves (or are a die-hard fan), you might want to go elsewhere.

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**Chad Dowdell** · Top Commenter · Fleming Island, Florida

I know you said arguably, so I will argue that the Lennon/Mccartney body of work blows jagger and richards away as the best creative duo in history.

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**Bert Lindsay Doggers** · Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

@chad. U most b jokin.

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**Chad Dowdell** · Top Commenter · Fleming Island, Florida

I understand you're a stones fan, as am I, but jeez, the beatles are considered to be the greatest rock band in history. It's not like I said Air Supply or something.

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