



1

**Director:** Alex Westbrook

On June 8, 1969, The Rolling Stones fired guitar player Brian Jones, thus disrupting the original line up and forever changing the greatest rock n' roll band in the world. Twenty-two year old Mick Taylor would take his place, and two days after the death of Jones, Taylor would find himself on stage in Hyde Park playing a tribute concert in Jones' honor.

And so began what many call the most creative period of The Rolling Stones, an era that critics claim ended when Mick Taylor quit the band. It certainly cannot be understated that Taylor helped define the sound that would exemplify the creative capacity of the Stones on such albums as *Let It Bleed* and *Sticky Fingers*, two recordings that are considered seminal achievements in the history of rock music. *The Rolling Stones 1969 – 1974: The Mick Taylor Years* attempts to chronicle this period by characterizing Mick Taylor as a driving force in the band. For most Stones' fans, this is a well-known fact, but many loyal fans have been waiting for a documentary that would lay down the facts once and for all.

Unfortunately, *The Mick Taylor Years* is a disappointing documentary that talks very little about Mick Taylor himself, but instead covers facts that have already been hammered into the ground in past documentaries. In fact, the documentary includes only two or three very brief interviews with Taylor, hardly enough to come to any conclusion about Taylor's own feelings concerning his time as a Rolling Stone. Mick Taylor fans looking for answers about his departure will certainly not find them here; in fact, the documentary's name seems to be merely a sales tactic.

The documentary is heavy on interviews, including talks with Nigel Williamson of *Uncut Magazine* and blues legend John Mayall. There are a few interesting anecdotes from the above-mentioned individuals, but the majority of the commentary begins to run extremely thin after a short time, with the interviewees (apart from Mayall) having no actual relationships with the band. What we get is essentially a group of individuals who wax nostalgic concerning the three albums they considered the best, namely *Let It Bleed*, *Sticky Fingers*, and *Exile on Main Street*. Beyond that, things go sour, with many of the guests driving the proverbial stake through the heart of The Rolling Stones, citing their inability to produce anything of quality after the "golden age." While this reviewer does not deny The Stones have turned out some rubbish in their career, it's hardly fair to discount everything they've done after 1972.

As for footage, there is very little that has not been seen before. There are a few interesting moments, such as the trippy, psychedelic Jumping Jack Flash video, and some nice footage from the Hyde Park concert. But ultimately, the documentary suffers from what are most likely copyright restrictions, which leaves us with a rather sparse canvas consisting of what little could be obtained being tossed into the DVD. Watching *The Mick Taylor Years* continually reminded me of an amateurish YouTube video, complete with bad font styles, frequent stills of the band, and choppy music clips.

*The Rolling Stones 1969 – 1974: The Mick Taylor Years* is not authorized by The Rolling Stones, and it's easy to understand why. The documentary attempts to cover Mick Taylor's time with the band and tends to write off the band's later works. While The Rolling Stones certainly put out their share of less-than-stellar recordings, albums like *Some Girls* and *Tattoo You* remain two of their greatest achievements. Ultimately, *The Mick Taylor Years* could have been an interesting glimpse into the psyche of Mick Taylor, his reasons for leaving the band, and his work after the split, but ends up an extreme disappointment. For die-hard Stones fans, this will leave you scratching your head, and even fair weather fans will most likely find *The Mick Taylor Years* a failure.