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SUNDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2010

## Ripple Theater - Johnny Winter - Live Through The '80s DVD



You'd be forgiven for thinking that a DVD titled *Johnny Winter Live Through The '80s* wouldn't be all that great, but you're wrong. **Johnny Winter** went through a bit of a rebirth in the 1980's thanks to the popularity of **Stevie Ray Vaughan** and a new contract with Chicago blues label Alligator Records. Both of these helped introduce Johnny to a new audience and got some youngsters showing up at his concerts. I should know, since I was one of them. Even during the peak of my snotty thrash metal high school powers, I still loved blues and classic rock. A friend and I went to see Johnny at the Beacon Theater in NYC, early 1985 and were blown away by the frail, shirtless Texan's incredible energy and fiery playing. (His brother Edgar opened the show and did a great set that included a truly bizarre hip hop version of "Frankenstein.")

This DVD really brought me back to that great night at the Beacon 25 years ago. Starting off in Toronto, 1983 there's a kick ass version of "Unseen Eye" and 3 other smokers. Johnny's leading a powerful trio with John Paris on bass & harmonica and drummer Bobby Torello. In 1984, Tom Compton takes over on drums and there's footage from 3 different concerts - 1 from Europe and 1 in the US. The playing is tight but loose and production is primo. The band really rips it up on songs like "Mad Dog" and his frenzied take on Dylan's "Highway 61." After a semi-embarrassing music video for the song "Don't Take Advantage Of Me" (it was the 80's, all videos sucked) there's an electronic press kit Alligator Records put together with a cool interview with Johnny. After that, it's right back to the boogie with more footage from Europe in 1987 and 88.

Back in the 80's Johnny stopped using his gorgeous Gibson Firebird

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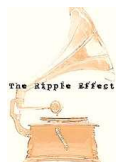
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