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"A sinister cabal of superior writers."

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Author: Richard Marcus — Published: Dec 06, 2012 at 12:38 pm

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If in the 1950s no one would film Elvis below the waist, and in the 1960s the networks demanded the Rolling Stones change the line "let's spend the night together" to "let's spend some time together", there's no way anyone would have allowed the full unbridled sexuality of Ike and Tina on the air in the 1970s.

It must have been hard enough to get Tina and the Ikettes' dance moves approved for primetime television. The band reminds you why it's called "funk" with almost every note they play. Even considering the poor quality of some of the footage, there's no disguising the fact their music wasn't the safe anti-septic stuff being churned out by Motown for mass consumption. They were playing down and dirty funk and R&B, which makes even most of today's rappers look tame in comparison.

At least 50% of the film, if not more, was shot off-stage. There's footage of Tina at home with the kids making supper and going grocery shopping like any housewife. However, even standing over a stove cooking, out of the slinky costumes and wigs she wore on stage, her natural glamour and presence shine through. Of course not everybody's house in those days has an in ground swimming pool, a sunken living room and a Grammy trophy on the mantelpiece. Yet in spite of these things we also see a fairly typical domestic situation for the time period. Wife and kids hanging at the house.



Interestingly enough, Ike never appears in the footage shot at home. We only ever see him in work related situations. Backstage, rehearsing the band, or in the studio Ike's presence is inescapable, but we hardly ever see the two of them alone together. Ike was taciturn to the point of almost hardly ever talking except during rehearsals; I can't recall him saying anything not related to business during the entire DVD. Even then, he doesn't say much. However, there's no doubt he's the one running the show musically. Watching him lead the band on stage and in rehearsals he's like a conductor. Even during concerts, he would tend to stand facing the audience in profile so he could cue the band when required.

Of course, with Tina out front, nobody was going to be paying much attention to anybody else anyway. She could blow the doors off an auditorium with her voice one moment and the next bring you to tears with her

gentleness. She's pulling an audience to their feet and getting them dancing in the aisles and then sitting them back down again to break their hearts.

Then there's her dancing. While your mind tells you she has to have her feet on the ground, your

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eyes are telling you a different story. Like some exotic bird she seems to float above the stage all the while twisting and twirling like an ecstatic dervish.

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