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DVD Review - Ike and Tina "On The Road 1971-72"

- Posted by [big boy](#) on December 20, 2012 at 7:00am
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From the opening scenes this thing just explodes off the screen. Tina and Ike are in the back of a limo, with Tina telling Ike she wants to go where she wants to go and Ike giving her the chilly pimp glare that intimidated many an adversary and colleagues as well. But Tina just laughs, calls him grumpy and puts her head on his shoulder.

Scandal seekers need not bother viewing this. There's no footage of Ike bullying Tina. She looks happy and in charge, on stage and off, a willing partner of the most electrifying rock and soul revue of their day, arguably of all times. This intimate portrait of Ike and Tina Turner at the height of their powers is touching and riveting.

Rock photographer Bob Gruen shot this footage on an early Sony portapac video recorder, much of it in mono. Ike and the band liked it initially because recorded on videotape, it could be played back and viewed immediately so the band could critique their performances. Ike and Tina got used to Gruen shooting their shows, and invited him into their home as well as allowing him virtually unlimited access to film them onstage in '71-'72 and backstage as well. Some of the footage is shot in color with a 16 millimeter film camera but the b&w stuff is just as good.

The concert footage begins opens with Tina and the Ikettes ripping into "River Deep Mountain High," Tina shaking her bidness like a washing machine on spin, squallin' like a scalded cat as the Ikettes do their best to keep up with her frenzied choreography and blistering vocals.

This is the textbook on how to tear up the stage, with rare glimpses backstage and in the studio of the work it takes to make it seem so seamless. Tina's shown teaching the Ikettes some snappy dance steps, rehearsing the girls in a heavenly acapella session for a song she wrote, "Oh Devil," explaining how she wants to convey the message of the reasons for all the crying eyes in the world.

The Ikettes get some solo turns on stage, blasting out a sexy, sassy version of the Five Du-Tones classic "Shake a Tail Feather," intercut with more footage of solo Ikettes shaking their stuff as fast as humanly possible.

There are glimpses of the Turner's home life as well, rare footage of the couple's young kids at home, tearing up the house, trying to break the diving board as Tina's being very housewifely in the kitchen trimming out cuts of meat.

Its good to see Ike portrayed as something other than the devil he's accused by Tina of becoming later in the marriage. As Gruen points out in the liner notes, the couple was together twenty years, and that partnership seems well matched here. There's no diva behavior apparent by either one. The couple is shown being very patient and accommodating, taking pictures with fans. The band acts like a bunch of little kids backstage, with none of the decadence usually associated with rock and roll.

Its about time Ike got some recognition for his prowess as musician and his role in rock. Although it doesn't come up here, Turner wrote and played on the first rock and roll song, "Rocket 88" in '49 for Sam Phillips. Turner said he only got about 40 dollars for the song, written on the way to Sun studio and sung by Turner's band's lead singer Jackie Brenston. Turner was also a producer, arranger and composer and talent scout, credited with discovering B. B. King and recording with blues legends including Howlin' Wolf Junior Parker, and Bobby Blue Bland.

Footage here shows him on organ and piano as well as guitar and vocals. There's a great clip of Tina seated beside Ike

on piano pouring out her soul on Holland-Dozier-Holland's "A Love Like Yours (Don't Come Knockin' Every Day)," a big hit for Martha and The Vandellas, with the duo slowing it down, deconstructing it, making it bleed soul.

But the centerpiece of this revue was Tina, and she never lets you forget it. Shot from the side, she looks eerily like Beyonce, belting out a version of Otis Redding's "I've Been Loving You Too Long To Stop Now" that rivals Otis in intensity and soul.

Tina's "Proud Mary" is still the gold standard for sexy, sweaty, funky, electrifying soul. Looking like Sheena Queen of the Jungle in skintight, tattered pelts, sweat soaked to the point of transparency, showcasing a physique cut like Tarzan, pelvis gyrating like Elvis on overdrive, she spits out the lyrics so fast it's hard to figure how she has time to breathe.

Borrowing James Brown's mantra, Tina's introduced as "the hardest working woman in show bizness" and proceeds to prove it once and for all with Sly Stone's "I Want to Take You Higher," the Ikettes reaching for the stars, Tina holding down the groove vocally before jumping in and taking over the stage for a strobe lit, booty shaking finale.

There's so much treasure here it takes several viewings to take it all in. This stuff is addictive, and as powerful today as it was back then. Take as needed for satisfaction. Repeat.

By Grant Britt

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Comment by [Ron Myhr](#) on December 26, 2012 at 3:45pm

Great review, I'm going to have to get that.

Just a note that some of the songs mentioned are available on the Spector-produced River Deep Mountain High album. In particular, A Love Like Yours and River Deep. That album was produced some five years earlier than the DVD time-frame, but really did frame the duos career for some years (even though Ike had little to do with it).



Comment by [sara henderson white](#) on December 28, 2012 at 11:55am

Thanks for this review. It takes me back to the only time I saw Ike and Tina Turner--in fall/winter of 1971/72. Tina was amazingly sexy. Her enactment of virtual oral sex with the microphone was so steamy that I was sweating in self-consciousness on a blind date. An unforgettable show. The Ikettes put on a darn good performance, too.

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