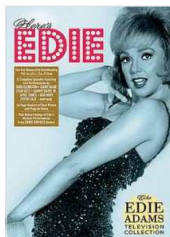


DVD Review: Here's Edie: The Edie Adams Television Collection

BY
ED

— 12/03/2013 FIND OTHERS: DVD, REVIEW, TV SHOW GET MORE: COMEDY, MUSIC/PERFORMANCE, MVD



STUDIO: MVD Entertainment | *DIRECTORS:* Barry Shear, Joseph Behar and others | *CAST:* Edie Adams and others

RELEASE DATE: 11/19/13 | *PRICE:* DVD 49.99

BONUSES: Adams clips from various Ernie Kovacs episodes, Muriel Cigar ads, promo films

SPECS: NR | 720 min. | TV variety | 1.33:1 fullscreen | mono

RATINGS (out of 5 dishes): Movie | Audio | Video | Overall

Fans of Ernie Kovacs had much to rejoice over with the recent release of not one but two Shout! Factory boxes of his TV work. The only element that was in small supply in those boxes were the musical interludes provided by Ernie's wife, muse and partner in conceptual comedy, Edie Adams.

The box set Here's Edie from MVD Entertainment corrects that omission and also reminds us just how incredibly versatile Edie was. It collects the 21 episodes of her 1962–64 variety series, a truly ambitious show that found her demonstrating all of her many talents while also showcasing diverse musical acts and experimenting with what could fit into the variety format.

A very informative essay by her son Joshua Mills contained in the set's booklet outlines the circumstances that led to this very unusual program airing on ABC in prime time. It seems that the Consolidated Cigar Company, the same sponsor that had given Kovacs such wide latitude to create his absolutely brilliant ABC specials and the surreal game show Take a Good Look, decided to do the same thing for Edie (the new spokeswoman for their Muriel "light" cigars — catchphrase: "Why don't you pick one up and smoke it sometime?")

Thus was born Here's Edie, later The Edie Adams Show, in which Edie was allowed by the sponsor to produce whatever she wanted in the way of a half-hour variety series, which resulted in a series of "themed" episodes. In her "New York" show, she sings with the Duke Ellington Orchestra, does the early Sixties equivalent of a music video shot on Manhattan streets and guest Peter Falk does a comic monologue (also shot on NYC streets) as a wisecracking cabbie.

Her "London" episode features various musical sequences shot in parts of the city that had gone unreconstructed since the Blitz, a dance with street performers, and a Shakespearean soliloquy (!) delivered by Sir Michael Redgrave on Lambeth Bridge. Her "Vegas" show contains a portion of her nightclub act, shot live at the Riviera, and the "Bossa Nova" episode is a musical delight featuring Stan Getz and guitarist Laurindo Almeida.

Even during the second season, when the show became a more familiar sort of variety vehicle — saddled with laughter and applause tracks — Edie kept her standards very high, so classical musicians like Andre Previn alternated with jazz legends like vocalist Jon Hendricks and a great roster of comic acts including Spike Jones and his band, Allan Sherman, and Soupy Sales. If all that wasn't enough, she devoted a full episode each to two of the most energetic and talented performers ever to be unleashed on a nightclub, Bobby Darin and Sammy Davis Jr.

Throughout the series, Edie proved herself not only a great singer but a very talented comic actress. In late '62 she had to drop the sublime Marilyn Monroe impression she developed on the Kovacs show (for obvious reasons), but she continued to do a number of other great impressions and take on a variety of comic personas, from bimbo sexpots to mothers and "career girls."

One can only delight in the fact that so much music was cleared in the preparation of this four-disc set. In addition to the many musical numbers included in the Here's Edie episodes, the package includes as supplements over a dozen of Edie's songs from the Kovacs shows.

This box establishes once and for all Adams' immense talent, above and beyond her seminal role in Kovacs' work. Plus, as was always the case with the great variety shows of the past, it's a fascinating window into a time long ago when a cigar company would sponsor an "arty" and entertaining variety series shown in prime time on a major network.



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