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REVIEW

Music DVD Review: Johnny Winter - *Live Through The '70s*

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"Born cross-eyed and albino, Johnny Winter (John Dawson Winter III) disregarded Mother Nature's unkindness to forge a career as one of the few great white blues-rockers."

I thought that this quote from [The Johnny Winter Story](#) website summed it up quite nicely.

I have not followed Johnny Winter's career as closely as I should have, although I did recently pick up the remarkable new legacy edition of *Second Winter*, which includes a *Live At Royal Albert Hall 1970* bonus CD. MVD Visual's excellent new *Live Through The '70s* DVD is my next step towards redeeming this shameful oversight.

Live Through The '70s features some incredible archival footage of Winter performing at various TV shows and concert venues during his peak performing years of the 1970's. Interspersed between all of the different shows are segments from an interview Winter did on the *Detroit Tubeworks* TV show, with host Dennis Fawley, where all participants appeared to be gleefully stoned off their gourds.

At one point Winter goes off on an extended expose on how badly he wants to be able to levitate: "Can you imagine how cool it would be just to sit up there, just float around and play your guitar?" Yes I can Johnny, yes I can. This was almost as entertaining as the music.

The DVD begins with a three song Danish TV performance from 1970 that was filmed in some tiny, smoke-filled Danish club, and captures a young and energized Johnny Winter backed by his original rhythm section of Tommy Shannon on bass and Uncle John Turner on drums, as well as his brother Edgar on keyboards, drums, and sax. Although the video looked like standard TV fare for that era, the audio tracks were surprisingly clear and robust.

The performance features an amazing stripped-down version of "Frankenstein" that laid the foundation for the monstrous version that Edgar would make a #1 hit of in 1973. While Johnny hammers out the main riff on a barely distorted electric guitar, Edgar transitions from keyboards to percussion to partake in an extended drum dual with Uncle John Turner, of which a large part would be snagged for his famous 1973 version. A jaw-dropping performance of BB King's "Be Careful Of The Fool," along with a sax-driven "Drop The Bomb," round out this killer set, making it well worth the price of the DVD by itself.

Although the 1970 Royal Albert Hall footage captures Winter's emergence as a bonafide blues-guitar superstar, it is by far the worst quality recording on this DVD. It essentially looks like one of those old 8mm films, from the '60s, that your parents broke out during family reunions, but it was definitely still worth including on this DVD.

During one part of the *Tubeworks* interview, Winter launches into an impromptu jam on "Key To The Highway," inviting his bassist Randy Jo Hobbs, who had never heard of the song, to join him. It starts of kind of awkward as Hobbs slowly figures out the chords, but eventually turns into a fiery 9-minute jam.

page 1 | [2](#)

Comments

#1 – December 26, 2008 @ 22:22PM – Glen Boyd [\[URL\]](#)

Great review Paul. This sounds like a must for the stuff with brother Edgar and the jam with Bloomfield, Miles, etc. alone. Too bad they don't have any of his stuff with the band "Johnny Winter And" that also included Rick Derringer on DVD. I saw that band live a few times, and brother, they kicked some ass.

Again, great review...I'll probably have to get this one.

-Glen