

GC MAGAZINE DALLAS

Johnny Winter: Live Through the '70s is a treasure trove of rare, hard-to-find, powerful and lively electric guitar masterpieces. Featuring very good video (for its age) and clear (if a bit low in volume) sound, this DVD culls Johnny Winter's most incendiary performances during classic rock's heyday—the 70s. The fifteen performances on this DVD are more than memorable. They are unforgettable. Winter's backing bands feature an all-star cast of musicians: guitarist Michael Bloomfield, Buddy Miles on drums, harmonica master Junior Wells, Dr. John on piano, his brother Edgar Winter on sax (and drums!) and Tommy Shannon on bass to name a few.

The performances, recorded in Connecticut (as originally broadcast on Don Kirshner's Rock Concert), Chicago (a Soundstage taping), London (filmed at the Royal Albert Hall), three different concerts from Germany (televised on Rockplast, Musikladen and Beat Club) and Denmark (broadcast on Danish TV's Gladsaxe Teen Club), are intercut with rare archival interview footage recorded at Detroit Tubeworks in 1970 (which also includes a performance of "Key To The Highway"). The question and answer sessions are quite interesting as Winter spends much of the time hiding behind a big droopy black hat and messing around with the interviewer who appears to be little more than a college student or, at the very least, a novice.

As with any project centered around film and video that is over thirty years old, the final product is only as good as the source material. Thankfully the source musical performances are stellar.

With regard to the picture, *Live Through The 70s* suffers from the occasional video glitch—especially the 1979 performances from Germany. Sadly, The Royal Albert Hall tracks are on film and as such are in the worst shape. The film, though treated, is dirty and scratched. The vast majority of the video is in good condition, although some of it appears to have moments of washout.

But it is the live footage of Winter and his bands in concert that make this DVD worthwhile. The DVD is highlighted by "Tell The Truth" featuring Edgar Winter on sax as recorded at the Royal Albert Hall, "Rock and Roll Hootchie Koo" from Waterbury, CT and the amazing version, featuring both drum and keyboard solos, of "Frankenstein" as played on Danish TV and is yet another track featuring Edgar Winter. Also of note are the extended jams featured from 1979 as televised on the German Rockplast TV show. "Walking By Myself," "Mississippi Blues" and "Suzie Q" feature a performer that is completely comfortable within his own skin. Each of these tracks check-in at over nine minutes in length, and with the extended bluesy solos, are a sight to behold.

It has been said that it's the music that matters. It truly does. The music contained on this DVD cements Winter's reputation as one of the best blues guitarists and performers of his generation.

- Mike Perciacante