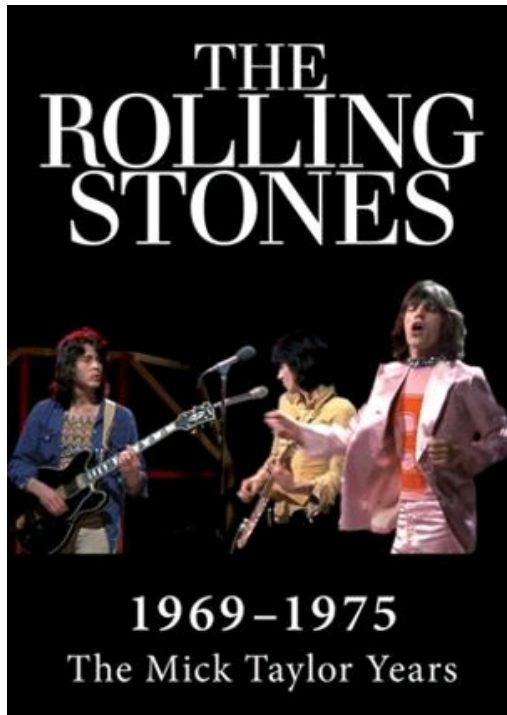




## FAME Review: The Rolling Stones - 1969 - 1974: The Mick Taylor Years (DVD)

**1969 - 1974:  
The Mick Taylor Years****The Rolling Stones***Sexy Intellectual - SIDVD557 (DVD)*Available from [MVD Entertainment Group](#).A review written for the Folk & Acoustic Music Exchange  
by **Mark S. Tucker**  
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Well, if you're going to talk about white blues, then the Rolling Stones, John Mayall, and Alexis Korner will have to figure heavily in your contemplations. The Stones are the subject, Mayall's often intercut in the commentaries, and Korner is mentioned as this DVD explores the interregnum between the Brian Jones and Mick Taylor eras in the Stones' slowly evolving journey, a stormy period that saw the ensemble shift from chartbusting hitmakers to heirs to the "greatest rock and roll band in the world" mantle, an arguable tag before, then, and after. There's an undeniable intensity to this DVD, a chronicle that shows the serious side of the oft whimsical domain of pop and rock, and further legitimizes the advent and prolificity of journalistic efforts in the video milieu.

The Sexy Intellectual label is slowly proving itself a formidable player in a field dominated by Eagle Vision, which is by far the most prolific purveyor of rock history and historiography. This particular smooth but dark venture reflects the turbulent times well, and, in that light, it should be noted that Taylor slotted in when Woodstock reversed itself in the tragic Altamont incident where the Stones made the monumental error of hiring the lunatic Hell's Angels for a security squad, resulting in mayhem. But then there's the very surprising interpolation of Gram Parsons and the Byrds' *Sweetheart of the Rodeo* and its avalanche influence on the group and on English rock, something rarely considered heretofore.

Commentary abounds, the least noteworthy of which is the decaying Robert Christgau's, whose eclipse from the halls is probably best shown in a frustrating and bafflingly insipid one-issue editorship of *Perfect Sound Forever* not too long ago. Christgau renders a weekend warrior's view from very much afar, didactically pontificating mostly upon himself in relationship to *Moonlight Mile*, a fanboy's perspective from mother's veranda. But decadance is in fact a mainstay in the Stones history, so perhaps Christgau's a silent semiotic. Then the documentary dives into the Stones' self-imposed tax exile from the UK, where their infamous ribald lifestyle ratcheted up rather than down, and the price of success becomes a game. As if all that weren't enough, Anita Pallenberg enters the picture, erstwhile love of Brian Jones, wife to Keith Richards and mother of their children, and paramour of Mick Jagger while *Performance* was being filmed, while recording sessions for *Exile on Main Street* were under way., and while she was still married to Keith.

In short, this time period was the pinnacle of what one interlocutor rightly terms as 'wretched excess'. Something had to give. It was almost the group itself. Ironically, then, the focus on Taylor is quickly lost but not the import: because of him, the group witnessed its highest point. He just happened to be recruited when the chaos was at its apogee, and the young gent was neither fame-seeker nor flamboyant rooster but rather the quiet core of the sophistications evinced from *Let It Bleed* until *It's Only Rock and Roll*. No small irony, either, that Taylor was robbed of all writing credits except in the marvelous *Ventilator Blues* on *Exile*, the only cut on any LP he was granted co-compositional rights to.

The Stones have always had more than one dark aspect, and that most ebon of all, theft of intellectual properties, is still the least discussed...save for here. Prepare for a descent into the glimmer cesspool, a spiral entertaining, informative and disturbing as hell, a sharp window on the many paradoxes rock music embraces, celebrates, and enshrines. Hopefully, some of what *The Mick Taylor Years* opens a door into will be much more fully embraced in the future and will re-instigate the past efforts of scribes like Fredric Dannen (*Hit Men*), George Tremlett (*Rock Gold: The Music Millionaires*), Marc Elliott (*Rockonomics*), and others.

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