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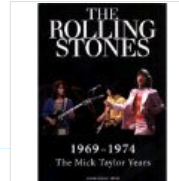
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"A sinister cabal of superior writers."

DVD Review: *The Rolling Stones - 1969 - 1974: The Mick Taylor Years*

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Author: Greg Barbrick — Published: Jul 27, 2010 at 12:19 pm

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"Many would argue that the lineup of The Rolling Stones was never better than it was in the years 1969 to 1974," intones the narrator towards the end of this documentary. I would have to agree, which is why I was so anxious to check this DVD out.

The first three albums the group made with Taylor are amazingly consistent. *Let It Bleed*, *Sticky Fingers*, and *Exile On Main Street*, are certainly the finest of the Stones' career. Nobody but The Beatles have ever been able to put a back to back run of records together like that, and it is doubtful anyone ever will.

The Rolling Stones - 1969 - 1974: The Mick Taylor Years is a 99-minute DVD which mainly uses interviews to tell the story. A number of writers are present, such as Barney Hoskyns, Robert Christgau, and the unbelievably annoying historian Alan Clayson. Mick Taylor's former boss John Mayall contributes, as do various former Stones sidemen. The most unlikely comments come from Taylor himself, who still seems to be in something like denial about the whole experience .

The thing I look for in a DVD like this is the rare footage, and there is a fair amount of it here. The only problem is that the clips generally only run about thirty seconds, there are no full performances of any songs. Still, it is cool to see Jagger and Richards sharing vocal duties during a live take of "Happy," for example. Other clips include "Brown Sugar," "Tumbling Dice," "Rip This Joint," and "Time Waits For No One."

The DVD begins in the wake of *Their Satanic Majesties Request* album, which was pretty much a disaster. With *Beggars Banquet*, Keith Richards and Mick Jagger took over the band from the increasingly added Brian Jones. During the sessions for the follow-up — titled *Let It Bleed*, Jones was replaced by Mick Taylor.

Jones died just two days before what was to be Mick Taylor's public introduction as a Rolling Stone, at a huge concert in London's Hyde Park. Talk about a pressure situation. The concert became a memorial for Brian Jones, and a bit of a trial by fire for the new guitarist. Mick Taylor had just turned 20. The group then toured the States, winding it up in December with a free show at a speedway in California called Altamont. The live footage accompanying this period is not particularly rare, but it is nice to see how easily Taylor had already slotted into the band.

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