



## The Rolling Stones Under Review (1975-1983) – The Ronnie Wood Years (Pt. 1) (2012)

**Studio:** *Chrome Dreams/Sexy Intellectual*

**Video:** 1.33:1

**Audio:** *English PCM Stereo*

**Extras:** *Contributor Biographies (7); Sugar Blue: Discovering The Blues Through The Stones*

**Length:** 115 minutes

**Rating:** \*\*\*

As with most bands that have sustained lengthy careers there are periods that shine and those that don't. With the Stones, most fans will point to the earlier work (on the whole) to be the most important musical time period—the period when the band was a tight, mostly integrated unit producing many blues-inspired tunes and classics like: “(I Can’t Get No) Satisfaction,” “Jumpin’ Jack Flash,” “Sympathy for the Devil,” “Wild Horses,” “Brown Sugar,” “You Can’t Always Get What You Want”—just to name a few.

This DVD is not authorized in any way by the band and contains commentary on the time period from the mid-70s to the early 80s—a very transitional time (both in music and personnel) for the band. Some of the commentators include: Sugar Blue, Robert Christgau, Anthony DeCurtis, Paul Gambaccini, Barney Hoskyns, Mark Paytress and Nigel Williamson. Aside from the quick summary of the time period at the beginning of the disc, the documentary goes year by year and album by album chronologically—for the most part.

The Stones began to lose some steam as the mid-70s approached. By 1974 they did not produce a top 10 single. Mick Taylor left the band and went over to The Jeff Beck Group and Faces. With the emergence/ popularity of funk in 1975 the Stones added Billy Preston to their tour. The press came down on the shows and criticized them for lack of presence. Ronnie Wood was offered a permanent position with the band after Faces broke up. In 1976, *Black and Blue* came out. The record met with mixed reviews and incorporated a mix of guitarists. “Fool to Cry” was a standout from this album and gave some a little reassurance that Jagger was still committed to writing good music. Overall, it was thought to be the best Stones record since *Exile on Main Street* (there were ~5 albums in between).

Around this time (and moving forward), punk music was growing in the UK and these upcoming bands were distancing themselves from million dollar rock stars and their overblown extremes. Keith Richards was suffering from serious heroin addiction and was arrested in Toronto—a setback for the band. Mick Jagger made his home in New York and the vibe of the city filtered into the next album, *Some Girls* (1978). The album featured a mixture of punk, disco and even a glimpse at early hip hop. “Beast of Burden” is a notable track while the title track reached #1. The future direction of the band was uncertain.

In 1980 the band released *Emotional Rescue*. Some of the comments on this record were: “...on the whole [the album] is forgettable,” “[The band is] going through the motions” and “[There is an] absence of ideas.” The record disappointed a lot of fans who felt the band was beginning to tread water. An obvious lack of leadership led to Mick Jagger taking the reins otherwise it seemed to clear to many that the band was going to fall apart. Keith Richards had almost no input into the record.

1981 saw the release of *Tattoo You*. The material consisted of older, never released songs that were reworked for the day. Some of the notables included “Start Me Up” and “Waiting on a Friend.” The Stones had begun turning into a corporate machine. By 1983 with the release of *Undercover* the band began to lose its commercial hold as

young people were introduced to New Wave and felt the Stones were “old people playing with young people toys.”

Mick tried his hand at being a solo artist, Bill Wyman was chasing 13-year old, Keith Richards had problems, Charlie Watts was a heroin addict and Ronnie Wood was in and out of rehab. The bands future was again on shaky ground.

The DVD attempts to go chronologically, but steps a little forward and back which might lead to some confusion. There are lots of video clips included (with mediocre to poor quality). There is a large section on Peter Tosh and his relationship with Jagger and other information about solo albums and not solely about the band. It was an entertaining view, but nothing surprising for those who are knowledgeable fans of The Rolling Stones.

—Brian Bloom

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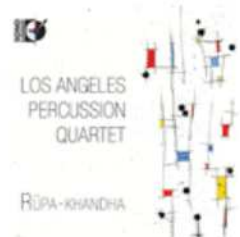


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