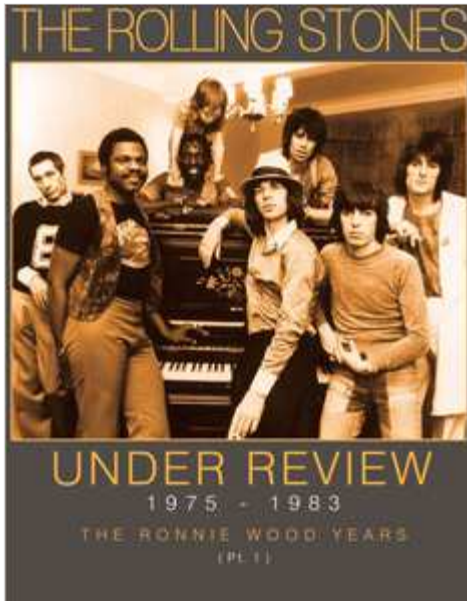


## Rolling Stones

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

MVD Entertainment Group

BluesWax Rating: 8 out of 10



### High Paced, Entertaining, and Informative

The Rolling Stones' first major transition took place when Brian Jones passed and Mick Taylor skillfully took his place and added instrumental fire (and blues) to the band. Unfortunately Taylor split from the band and along came Ronnie Wood.

This Ronnie Wood Years DVD is an amalgamation of album reviews, (snapshots of) concert performances, critics comments (by the always insightful Anthony DeCurtis, the snobbish Robert Cristgau, Barney Hoskyns, Nigel Williamson, Paul Gambaccini, Mark Paytrees, and narrator Thomas Arnold). Musicians also chime in (Billy Preston, Sugar Blue, Keith Richards, and Ronnie Wood) and of course there's a welcomed dose of hearsay and gossip. I didn't care for Cristgau's negative comments about Harvey Mandel (who was not interviewed), who was being considered a potential replacement for Mick Taylor. Conversely, other critics praised Mandel for his memorable guitar work on "Hot Stuff" from their often overlooked Black and Blue recording. In fact there's a lot of debate about the merits of Black and Blue, especially with the addition of Billy Preston, and of course Wood.

There are lengthy discussions about Keith Richards' drug decline, his inability to function with the band, and his partial cleanup. Sugar Blue talks about how he became a member of the Stones, his first audition that lasted several hours, and Blue's bluesman contributions to the band. Blue also cites Wood's vitality that he brought to the band. A good deal of time is spent about Jagger's move to New York City and how the Big Apple influenced Mick's songwriting, specifically on Some Girls, where DeCurtis smartly opines that Some Girls was "Jagger's album," that also had a Studio Fifty-Four disco vibe. Remember "Miss You?" "Miss You" is compared to the Bee-Gees' "Saturday Night Fever" (shockingly for me). The bass lines are remarkably similar, yet it's noted that the Stones perfectly

melded rock and rhythm and blues into disco. Yet *Some Girls* also borrowed from the punk scene, specifically the rawness of "Respectable," and "Shattered," are partially performed live here.

There's a great segment from *Saturday Night Live* that's not so much about the Stones performance and more about Jagger playing himself being interviewed on the Tom Snyder show (except it's Dan Aykroyd playing Snyder). I also enjoyed (and forgot) about how the Stones signed Peter Tosh to their record label, and includes the SNL segment where Jagger enters and enthusiastically joins Tosh's "Don't Look Back" performance.

There's also a too-short "Rock Me Baby" with Richards jamming with Woods's *New Barbarians*. The journalists all line up to voice their disdain for the *Emotional Rescue* album, and make downward comparisons to the previous *Some Girls*. Which takes us to the 1981 chatter of the near demise of the band, and the legendary Jagger-Richards feuding, but it's not over as the Stones recover with *Tattoo You*, with their rebound smash hit "Start Me Up," later used for a Microsoft Windows ad campaign. But even with the success of *Tattoo You* the critics weren't enthusiastic about the supporting Stones tour, and DeCurtis reminds us how this 1981 – '82 worldwide romp was their last tour for nearly seven or eight years thereafter. Like *Emotional Rescue*, the 1983 *Undercover* is also torn apart by the journalists and was considered a critical failure, how it portrayed the Stones as no longer groundbreaking and more aged, and how the band suddenly morphed into a greatest-hits touring band.

The extras include Sugar Blue's discovering of the blues through the Stones, and the contributor's bio's. Blue talks about his and his mom's jazz roots, his love of Chicago blues and recounts hearing the Stones perform "Little Red Rooster." This so called special feature cannot be more than ninety seconds long.... The bios, called "biogs" here, are nice to have as a one or two time review. Lastly, the "beyond DVD" portion is an advertisement for other Stones-related DVDs. Yawn. So the extras aren't very extraordinary.

Even though this is supposed to be "The Ronnie Wood Years" DVD, this documentary is more about the entire Rolling Stones 1975-1983 era than Woodie himself, though he was a significant addition to the band. Long story short, this DVD is an excellent compilation about a band that was obviously going through transitions, some of which were very successful, other periods were not. I enjoyed just about every aspect about this film and found that it moved along swiftly, never bored me, and held my attention in detail throughout. Is it worthwhile to purchase? Even though I would have enjoyed a few more complete and live performances, but for the majority; I wholeheartedly feel that this is one very good representation of this mid-career portion of the Stones' career.

Bob Putignano is a senior contributing editor at *BluesWax*, a contributing writer at *Blues Revue*, and the heart and soul of [Sounds of Blue](#).