

Search



ABOUT | SUBMISSIONS | ADVERTISING | STAFF



FEATURES ▾ COLUMNS ▾ BLOGS ▾ MUSIC ▾ FILM ▾ TELEVISION ▾ DVDS ▾ BOOKS ▾ COMICS ▾ MULTIMEDIA ▾ EVENTS ▾ NEWS

DVDs

Home > DVDs > Reviews > The Rolling Stones



The Rolling Stones Under Review: 1975-1983: The Ronnie Wood Years Pt.1

By **Jedd Beaudoin** 16 November 2012

This latest installment in the *Rolling Stones Under Review* series begins with the critical moment when guitarist Mick Taylor abandoned ship, making way for one Ron "Ronnie" Wood, guitarist for The Faces and a man who'd got by on his solo debut, *I've Got My Own Album to Do* (1974) with a little help from Mick Jagger and Keith Richards. Wood wasn't an immediate Stone--he was hired as a touring guitarist, then, upon the disbanding of Faces, he found himself awarded the much-coveted position of Permanent Stone.

Wood's position is something of debate--critic Barney Hoskyns mutters that Wood has a style that makes him virtually indistinguishable from any other guitarist while others, including Anthony DeCurtis and Robert Christgau see Wood--with dangling cigarette and haystack hair to match Richards--as a natural replacement for Taylor. Over the course of nearly two hours these men and other storied critics such as Nigel Williamson, Mark Paytress, and Paul Gambaccini, parse the albums that constitute the first phase of the Ron Wood years. (True to the DVD's title, 1975-1983.)

Black and Blue (1976) is reviewed in (perhaps surprisingly) glowing terms as a record that saw the quintet bounding back from 1974's lackluster *It's Only Rock 'n' Roll* and beginning--some suggest mostly under Jagger's thumb--to update its sound, incorporating elements of contemporary dance music, funk, and reggae (one of Richards' great loves). Christgau claims he finds the track "Hey Negrita" "inexhaustible", with it and the tune "Melody" (inspired by keyboardist Billy Preston) being two of the better pieces on a record that John Peel hailed as perhaps the greatest ever Stones album, although distance and time may have proven that statement little more than hyperbole.

Some Girls (1978), recorded in the aftermath of Richards' heroin bust in Toronto, is given extensive play in this video, as it was, ostensibly, a record that saved the guitarist's life in some manner and a record that proved that the band was a vital and vibrant as ever. Jagger channeled disco on the big hit "Miss You", featuring harmonica man Sugar Blue (interviewed here) and all the might those Stones could offer.

The critics here miss out on some of the record's better tracks, though, ignoring the fact that there really isn't a duff tune in the lot. No matter, its position in the larger body of work remains intact as the discussion moves forward to one of the most disappointing and pallid of all Stones records, 1980's *Emotional Rescue* and its successor, *Tattoo You* (1981), which was stapled together with bits and bobs of songs from past sessions--including some featuring Mick Taylor--



The Rolling Stones: Under Review 1975-1983: The Ronnie Wood Years Pt.1

(Chrome Dreams; US DVD: 20 Nov 2012)

[Amazon](#)

Like 0

Tweet 0

PRINT

EMAIL

0 COMMENTS

SHARE

Text: A A A

NOW ON POPMATTERS

Today • Popular

Features

Dignified and Old: Rock 'n' Roll's Senior Moment
Reinventing Bach

Columns

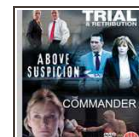
INTERSTITIAL OVERDRIVE: A View Out: The Search for Identity in 'Cléo from 5 to 7'

Blogs

SHORT ENDS AND LEADER: History Always Repeats: 'Lincoln'
MOVING PIXELS: Why I Played 'Borderlands 2'
By Myself

More

PM PICKS



Timberland

FREE SHIPPING ON ORDERS OVER \$100. PLUS FREE RETURNS.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

but nevertheless became the best album from the Stones camp in the whole of the '80s.

No small feat when you consider that the band was on the verge of imploding with Jagger and Richards at loggerheads not just about the direction of the band but about virtually everything in general. Jagger had by then become a major New York socialite while Richards, finally waking up from his heroin addiction, struggled to gain some control of what was, after all, partially his band.

Anyone familiar with the story of the Stones won't be surprised by much of the dirt that's dished here but it does serve as an excellent refresher course in the band's lore. Interestingly, 1983's *Undercover*, is treated with remarkable kindness, given that the overtly political single "Undercover of the Night" and its follow-up, the average sexcapades number "She Was Hot" are about the only two worthwhile tracks on the album. ("Pretty Beat Up" isn't just the title of a song on *Undercover* it's a phrase that perhaps encapsulates the state of the band in 1983.)

Rougher waters were to come--1986's *Dirty Work* (although reviewed positively at the time) is more memorable for its sleeve and the Richards' composition "Sleep Tonight" than anything else. It almost also spelled the end of the band--it was the first time in years that the Stones didn't tour at the end of a three-year cycle and there was enough acrimony to go around that Jagger, Richards, Wyman, Watts, and Wood couldn't get it together to play Live Aid.

But that's a story for the next installment in this series and one that we can certainly look forward to viewing as it, like so many in the Under Review series, is guaranteed to be handled with expert care.

Extras include contributor biographies and an extended interview with harmonica player Sugar Blue. If you're not familiar with the other titles that the folks at Chrome Dreams have whipped up about these Stones, there's a menu item that will allow you a quick glance at those titles--each of them worth a viewing of their own. Those six DVDs, like this one, have everything to satisfy the obsessive in search of the singular saga of The Rolling Stones.

Rating:
 Extras rating:

Like 0 Tweet 0 0 submit

MEDIA

Open Call for Submissions for Popular Flashpoints Series
Call for Book Reviewers and Bloggers

More



PopMatters on Facebook Like 9,821
Login You need to be logged into Facebook to see your friends' recommendations.
How Visualization Becomes Poetry: On Halloween and Do Androids Dream...? 305 people recommended this.
Listening Ahead: Upcoming Releases for November 27 people recommended this.
Up, Down, Turn Around: The 15 Best New Order Songs of All Time 9 people recommended this.
China, the Rest of the World, and the Political Fish Caught in the Net 81 people recommended this.

RATINGS

- 10 - The Best of the Best
- 9 - Very Nearly Perfect
- 8 - Excellent
- 7 - Damn Good
- 6 - Good
- 5 - Average
- 4 - Unexceptional
- 3 - Weak
- 2 - Seriously Flawed
- 1 - Terrible

RELATED ARTICLES

Rolling Stones Myth and Fact Swirl Around By Robert Lloyd 15 Nov 2012
The Rolling Stones - "Doom and Gloom" (stream) By PopMatters Staff 11 Oct 2012
Music & Dirty Little Secrets: 'Muddy Waters & The Rolling Stones Live at the Checkerboard Lounge' By W. Scott Poole 30 Jul 2012
Mick Jagger Performs on 'Saturday Night Live' By William Carl Ferleman 21 May 2012