



The 1970s Review

[Eric Clapton](#)

Sexy Intellectual - SIDVD577 (DVD)

Available from [MVD Entertainment Group](#).

A review written for the Folk & Acoustic Music Exchange
by **Mark S. Tucker**
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Far as I can tell, Eric Clapton was the only musician in rock history who provoked an actual god level of appreciation among fans...by accident. This was during his days under blues center-point John Mayall and the Bluesbreakers. Though there was, despite urban legend to the contrary, at first just one 'Clapton is God' graffiti spray-painted on a wall in an Islington Underground station, a photographer snapped a photo, complete with ironic dog urinating on the clause. It was after that amusing incident that the slogan erupted elsewhere. It wasn't an untoward sentiment, though, as we've seen through time, and the 'guitar god' epithet was thusly born. Clapton is usually considered second only to Jimi Hendrix in the rock genre and, on that, even boneheads like David Fricke (*Rolling Stone*) agree.

To that point, Eric had been in the Yardbirds for years, where his work was quite satisfying but nowhere indicative of what would come, and then with Mayall for just a few months, but his prowess was unmistakeable where'er h went. Then came Cream, with fellow muso monsters Ginger Baker and Jack Bruce, and E.C.'s virtuosity was magnified to Olympian heights. Inspired by Jimi Hendrix, the guitarist caught fire beyond even the technical inspirations lauded with Mayall, co-creating an ensemble well regarded as seminal to acid rock, psychedelic musics, and bluesrock, and all of that is back-chapter to *The 1970s Review*. There's also a side anecdote that the film does not carry but that tickles me pink: Clapton, #2 all-time greatest, was heavily influenced by #1, Hendrix, and when Eric left Mayall, Peter Green, the guy considered #3 by *Mojo* magazine, stepped into the Bluesbreakers just prior to creating Fleetwood Mac. Small world.

It wasn't Hendrix, though, who had the most lasting influence on the gent, as this DVD makes very clear. That honor goes to The Band. When Clapton heard their debut, he threw over all the acid rock and traveled in the direction of roots authenticity. A very sensitive human being and someone who was hopelessly enamored with the blues, he deeply responded to the depth of feeling in the group's music. Just by that exposure, he felt healed after a nerve-wrackingly tumultuous career with Cream (the highly acrimonious relationship between Baker and Bruce is legendary) and Blind Faith, where the volatile Baker had become the group's drummer only through the insistence of Steve Winwood.

All of that, a welter of problems upon problems upon problems, forms the groundwork here and, in a long line of coincidences, the group that had toured under Blind Faith, Delaney and Bonnie, became E.C.'s new home for a time, a residence in which he was curiously a distinct second banana. Thus the band-ing instinct was rapidly becoming anathema to his forte. One more try, Derek & the Dominos, provided the denouement before he detached from that path completely, never to return. Interestingly, critical reception of the superb *Layla and Other Assorted Love Songs* was lukewarm, and consumers weren't terribly avid either. Worse, during the studio sessions, Hendrix died, and, not long after them, fellow band member Duane Allman, whom Clapton looked upon as the brother he never had, was killed in a motorcycle accident.

And that, y'all, is where I'll leave you, as the 2-1/2 hour DVD digs into the long remainder of the tale and its revelations of struggles with alcohol, heroin, women, his music, the death of his son, and much more...not to mention ever increasing success, fame, and artistic advances. As you listen and watch, you'll find the most intense yet refreshing presence among the commentarists here is the criminally underlauded musician Bobby Whitlock, co-founder of Derek & the Dominos, and who's still active and retains his powers (see [here](#)). He's one of those people you so rarely meet who just tells it like it is while heavily invested in everything he talks about. Based on his presence, I think I'll go back and pick up his autobiography; it's gotta be as fascinating as this DVD of pain and brilliance.

And, um, that whole Enoch Powell thing with Eric...holy Jesus!

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