

Dazz Band, Brothers Johnson go live on DVDs

"THE BEST OF FUNK: DAZZ BAND" (ABC Entertainment/MVD Visual) ★★★½ out of five; **"THE BEST OF FUNK: BROTHERS JOHNSON"** (ABC Entertainment/MVD Visual) ★★★ — These concert DVDs, both recorded at the 2003 Stone Soul Picnic in Oakland, Calif., feature two of the more influential funk acts of the 1970s and early '80s in the Dazz Band and the Brothers Johnson.

Of course, the fact the audience is on lawn chairs and blankets on the grounds of Dunsmuir Historic Estate, is a pretty good indication that both acts were well past their prime even six years ago.



I was a fan of the Dazz Band as a kid — the Grammy-winning "Let It Whip" remains a favorite — and their performance that sunny afternoon certainly is the more impressive of the two.

Over the course of an hour, the guys serve up energetic renditions of a half dozen hits, including standouts "Ain't Nothin' But a Jam," "Disco Dazz," "Joystick" and the aforementioned "Let It Whip."

Sure, the Pac-Man sound effects in "Joystick" sound comically dated and the too-

long slow jam "Heartbeat" contains an ample amount of cheese — but it was a rollicking set nevertheless.

Sadly, "Dazz Band" contains no extra features.

"Brothers Johnson" also offers up a handful of hits (10 in their case) over the course of 60 minutes. George and Louis Johnson shine on "Ain't We Funkin' Now," "Thunder Thumbs & Lightnin' Licks" and a pair of Sly and the Family Stone staples ("Family Affair," "If You Want Me to Stay") — but the remainder of the set (including a so-so reading of Cameo's "Word Up") is rather forgettable.

Bonus points for a fairly in-depth interview with the brothers immediately after the show.

Fans will enjoy hearing what the guys have to say all these years later. (Jeffrey Sisk)



Clint Weiler