



The Daily News

ONLINE EDITION

“Blood Sweat & Tears: Spinning Wheel” (Cherry Red Films/MVD Visual) (2 1/2 out of five stars)

By 1980, the ship had long since sailed for Blood Sweat & Tears, a band whose unique fusion of jazz and rock — not to mention chart-topping singles such as “Spinning Wheel” and “You’ve Made Me So Very Happy — helped sell millions of records in the late 1960s and early ’70s. But nearlegendary internal strife (where’s “VH1 Behind the Music” when you need it?) eventually derailed BS&T, and by 1978, the band had broken up. Undeterred, frontman David Clayton-Thomas reformed the band in 1980 with a new cast of supporting musicians, and Blood Sweat & Tears released a critically panned album (“Nuclear Blues”) and hit the road. “Spinning Wheel” documents the band’s April 9, 1980, concert in Halifax, England. Captured on poorly shot, grainy video, the DVD shows BS&T noodling their way through a dozen songs. Clayton-Thomas gives it his all and the band sounds fine, but the performance fails to register with the audience. There is polite applause throughout — a little louder for the hits — but, by and large, the crowd at Halifax’s Civic Theatre is remarkably subdued. Clayton-Thomas elicits some unintentional laughter with his painfully awkward dance moves during “Lucretia MacEvil,” and his show-closing cover of Jimi Hendrix’s “Manic Depression” (seriously?) reminded me of Bill Murray’s classic lounge singer sketches from “Saturday Night Live.” The band shows its chops on “Spanish Wine/Blood Sweat & Tears Blues,” a 15-minute-plus freeform jazzy jam session, the highlight of the performance. The work of Robert Piltch on classical guitar is especially impressive. Overall, however, this is a sub-par effort from a band that had passed its prime.

(*Jeffrey Sisk*)