



DVD: Fishbone - Critical Times: Fishbone's Hen House Sessions (Music Video Distributors)

Approximate total running time: 90 Minutes

Reviewed by [DJ Johnson](#)



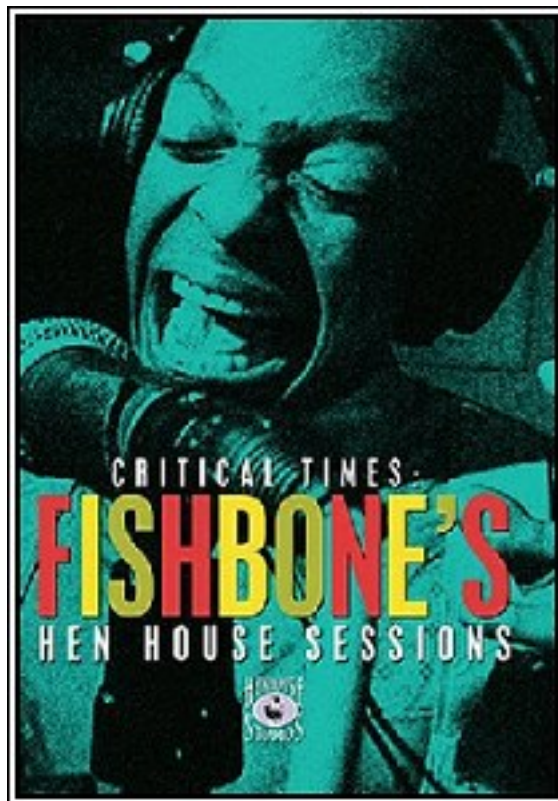
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The Hen House is a unique recording studio in Venice Beach, California, where bands can come in and record for free (and with studio prices being what they are, that's nothing to sneeze at), with the one catch being that there are cameras literally everywhere you turn and you must sign papers saying they

have the right to film you and do what they will with the footage. As anyone who has been subjected to cameras over a long period of time will tell you, the self-consciousness soon fades and you soon forget they're there, for the most part. Hen House Studios is home to a lot of interesting film of musicians being themselves, for better or for worse.

Fishbone decided to take Hen House up on the offer in 2001, following the studio's one set-in-stone rule by leaving their shoes outside the door. Critical Times: Fishbone's Hen House Sessions is a kind of video

highlight reel of interesting moments during those sessions, and there were certainly plenty of those to see. First of all, if you're a fan of the band and their radical blend of funk, ska and high-energy punk, this is an hour and a half of bliss, because despite the fact that only three original members remained by this point (vocalist Angelo Moore, bass god Norwood Fisher and trumpeter/harmonist/attitude Dirty Walter Kibby), Fishbone was still unbelievably tight.

Another aspect that makes this interesting is the prevailing attitude they bring to work. We've been inundated with thousands of hours of "Behind The Music"-style mini-films that have left us with one belief perma-locked in our minds: pro musicians, much like pro basketball players, are self-destructive morons with no work ethic to speak of. It's not true, but that's what we've been sold. Fishbone is so far the other way it's shocking even to those of us who know better than to expect every band to be Motley Crue. Their work process is fascinating to watch. A lot of the nuts and bolts are worked out by Fisher, drummer John Steward and guitarist Spacey T. When we speak of nuts and bolts in terms of a Fishbone song, we're talking about shrapnel flying at high speed, yet there's no posing, no flexing; just three guys dedicated to getting intricate parts down to a science before it's time for the others to step up. Sure, it's a little hard to concentrate on all this because Fisher is sporting a... I guess you'd call it a hairstyle that is basically all his hair twisted into a foot-long spike sticking frontwards out of a backwards baseball cap. As his head bobs, so does... it, a desperate cry for a Viagra-based shampoo. After a while you get used to it. Okay, after a while YOU might get used to it. I couldn't stop staring at the thing and thinking it was the most ridiculous looking hairstyle I'd ever seen, but that's just me. It just goes to show you how professional these guys

are. Not one snicker. Just work.

Oh, but between those blocks of hard work there was plenty of laughter. Despite brief moments of very minor tension, these guys laugh and laugh and have a great time working together, and that makes for a very enjoyable film. The music is pretty damned hot, too, and fringe fans are going to find themselves well into the fold after this. The recently completed documentary about the world famous band Fishbone, just premiered at the Silver Lake Film Festival and is now available for purchase (DVD) at: www.musicvideodistributors.com The DVD will also be available in every Tower Records store in the U.S.A on and after November 30th, 2004 and at HenHouseStudios.com. For more information about the film please visit: www.criticaltimesthemovie.com

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