

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO
ANAMORPHIC
 WIDESCREEN DVD
 FOR EVERYONE!

HOME PAGE

THE RUMOR MILL

DOOGAN'S VIEWS

REVIEWS

CONTEST

UPCOMING DVD ART

FAQ & ARCHIVES

SURF THE LINKS

DVD DISCUSSION

ADVERTISE

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Rockers

1977 (2000) - Rockers Film Corporation (Music Video Distribution)

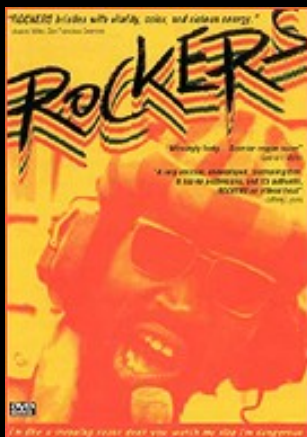
review by Frank Ortiz of **The Digital Bits**

Film Rating: B

Disc Ratings (Video/Audio/Extras): C+/B-/B

Specs and Features

109 mins, NR, letterboxed widescreen (1.85:1), single-sided, single-layered, Amaray keep case packaging, artist/actor bios with music, **Information on the Culture**, seven bonus audio tracks with stills (**Satta Amasagana**, **Man in the Street**, **Waiting for the Bus**, **Honeyball**, **The Beating**, **Rockers** and **The Raid**), film-themed menu screens, scene access (34 chapters labeled by artist and song), languages: Jamaican and English (DD 2.0 mono), subtitles: English



The story of **Rockers** goes as follows. Horsemouth is the one of the best ska-reggae drummers in Jamaica (in the movie and in the real music world). He wants to make money from his record sales, instead of having all the money go to the "capitalist mafia" running the scene. But when he makes some headway as this, the mafia rears its ugly head. So Horsemouth and his friends attempt to show the capitalist gangsters who's the boss in the rastafarian hood, where culture and dreads (roots, values and loyalty to friends) run strong.

Granted, the plot is simple and the visual images are nice. But they're not the strongest points here - it's all about the music. Just about everyone who was anyone in reggae music at the time is in this movie. The Abyssinians, Kiddus I, The Heptones, Burning Spear, Peter Tosh, Bunny Wailer, Third World, the Maytones, Dillinger and many more add to the soundtrack. The music is awesome.

There are times when the video on this disc is good, especially considering that this is an older independent release. The print used for the transfer does show its age -

there are some dirt flecks apparent here and there, as well as some areas where the colors are slightly soft. Still, this is the best this picture has looked in a very long time. An anamorphic transfer would have added to the video quality, but it's unquestionably better than viewing on VHS. I actually would rather see this film on DVD than projected in the theater. One note about the video - the subtitles are actually on the film, and can't be turned off. They don't cover every conversation in the movie, but do adequately cover the main dialogue spoken in Jamaican English with Rasta Patois.

The audio is clean. I can't even imagine how much restoration was done, but this disc sounds really good. Yeah... it would have been cool to have a new 5.1 mix, or maybe a music-only audio option. But you can't take away from the fact that this low-budget film sounds great on DVD, almost 25 years later.

If you're unfamiliar with Jamaican English, I recommend that you view the "Culture" section of this DVD. It has a few quick text notes that might help you understand the dialect, as well as the background of the people and their music. It also quickly explains how "ska" music was followed by "rock steady", then "reggae" and finally "rockers". There are also seven bonus music tracks that you can access on this disc, which play with stills.

The Jamaican sound has influenced many generations of music - even much of what is popular today. Reggae continues to be popular all over the world, and it's definitely the heart of **Rockers**. This is a movie with excellent music, where most of the actors are also first-rate musicians. The disc is well worth the price to add to your library. Yah must check it out, mon!

Frank Ortiz

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