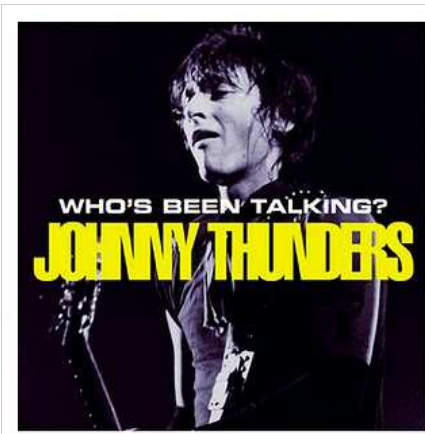




SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2011

Johnny Thunders - "Who's Been Talking?" Live DVD Review (MVD Video)



With the release of the New York Dolls' DVD *Looking Fine on Television*, I went back to check out some of the Dolls/Thunders releases that I've missed over the years. These first of the discs that I dropped on was Johnny Thunders *Who's Been Talking* which is a live DVD of one of Johnny's last concerts. This show was filmed at Club Citta in Osaka, Japan on April 3, 1991 and this is the last known recorded show that Johnny played as he was found dead in New Orleans on April 23rd. The music on *Who's Been Talking* will be familiar to long-time fans as a portion of this show was released on the 2CD set *Add Water and Stir* and the full show was released on the two volume Japanese set *Saddest Vacation - Last Live in Japan*. What makes this release a treat is that it is the first full concert video of Johnny

playing with the Oddballs as, outside of 10 minutes of bootleg footage from the Cat Club, I haven't seen anything else out there.

This show is neither the barn-storming, ball-busting rawk of the Heartbreakers nor the troubadour-style acoustic sets that Thunders was playing around NYC prior to his death but contains elements of both. With the addition of Allison's Gordy's prominent backing vocals (she takes lead on the torch song "I Can't Go On Without You") and Jamie Heath's saxophone, the show has more of a "Buster Poindexter" style flair than Johnny's typical stage show. Johnny takes on a "showman" role for this concert but his illness has him obviously moving at a slower clip. He rarely plays guitar while singing but guitarist Stevie Klasson plays some nice leads with Johnny adding in some of his immediately-recognizable licks when he isn't singing. The drug-fueled sloppiness may be gone but Johnny stays true to form by getting both the name of the city wrong (he gives a thank you to "Tokyo" at the end of the set) and improvising some dirty lyrics to "Hang on Sloopy".

The setlist spans both the Dolls and Thunders back catalogues and Johnny plays some material ("Society Makes Me Sad" and "Disappointed in You" that was new at that time (and "Disappointed in You" was ultimately released on the 1993 Totonka bootleg *Sticks & Stones* which was later re-released by Cleopatra). It is an interesting and eclectic set list as Johnny skips "Chinese Rocks" and "You Can't Put Your Arm Around A Memory" from his 'traditional' set and includes covers of "Hang on Sloopy" and "You Can Walk My Dog" (which are in addition to the standard covers in the set list of "Pills", "Louie Louie", and "Stepping Stone").

Here is the complete (and corrected) set list:

1. In Cold Blood
2. Hit The Road Jack > I'm Not Your Stepping Stone
3. Blame It On Mom
4. Disappointed In You

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5. Sad Vacation
6. You Can Walk My Dog
7. Pipeline
8. I Can't Go On Without You
9. Louie Louie / Hang On Sloopy
10. Society Makes Me Sad
11. Too Much Junkie Business > Pills
12. Just Another Girl
13. So Alone
14. Personality Crisis

Encore: (w/ Kiyoshiro Imawano on harmonica and backing vocals)

15. Born To lose
16. I Wanna Be Loved

The disc runs for 66 minutes and also contains a bonus feature which is a short bio write-up by Betty Chienne. The audio quality is solid and on-par with any of Thunders' previously released live shows but the video is a bit hazy. The video editing shows some 'amateur' camera jerks and rough edits but it is very watchable and there is a lot worse –looking Thunders footage out there. While video only shows a single camera angle, the show was filmed with multiple cameras so you get to see different visual perspectives of the whole band in action along with close-ups of the members.

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Long-time Johnny Thunders fans will want to check out this disc if they haven't already picked up a copy.

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