

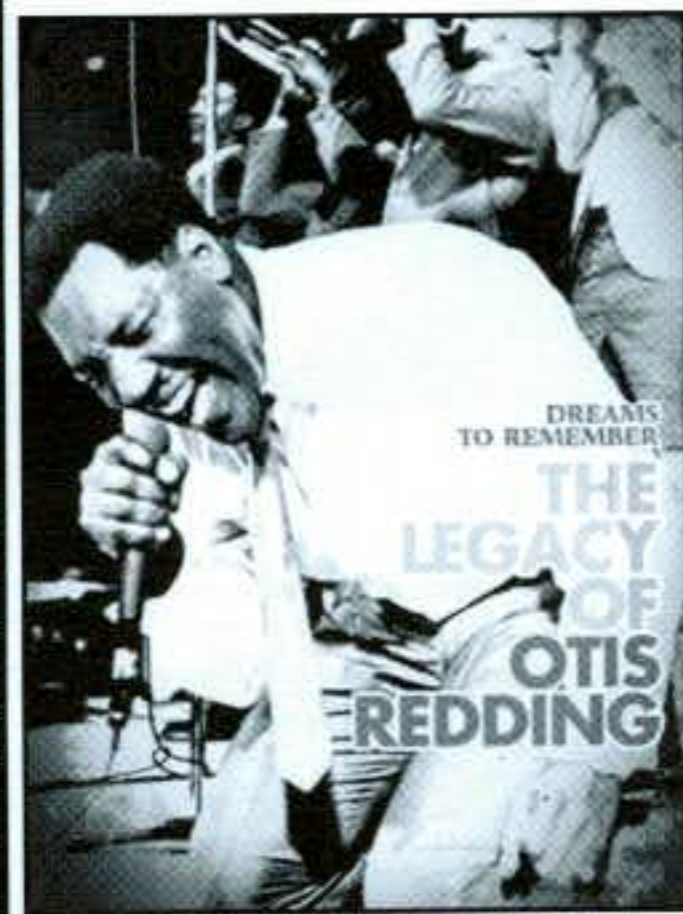
even incongruous footage of the band tearing through "Chinese Rocks" at the US Festival while California beach bunnies and bronzed surfer dudes dance like Deadheads. And I was happy to see some good performances of underrated, less-documented Ramones tunes like "I'm Against It," "Crummy Stuff" and "Love Kills."

**BONUSES:** Disc 1 includes some short, early interviews with Dee Dee, Joey, Tommy and Danny Fields; a featurette about the Ramones' first trip to Argentina; wacky appearances on Sha Na Na and Swedish TV; three rare music videos; and extensive photo galleries with some iconic imagery from Robert Matheu, Jenny Lens and Ian Harper.

## Dreams To Remember: The Legacy Of Otis Redding

(Reelin' in the Years; www.realinintheyears.com)

More than anything else, this new DVD emphasizes what a warm, funny, dynamic and larger-than-life figure Otis Redding was onstage, in ways that even his concert albums haven't made clear. It's one thing to hear that explosive voice, and it's quite another to hear it while also witnessing the electrifying way he dominates a stage, shaking from within like a volcano. Dreams To Remember mixes positively incendiary live footage, TV appearances and goofily charming promo films with interviews with former band mates Steve Cropper and Wayne Jackson, Redding's wife Zelma, Stax Records head Jim Stewart and others. Redding's sheer force of personality even lights up the corny early lip-synched TV spots, and the promo films for "Fa-Fa-Fa-Fa-Fa (Sad Song)" and the down-on-the-farm lovers' quarrel with Carla Thomas on "Tramp" are better than most videos, thanks to his dynamic clowning and inherent, unforced acting ability. Of course, the truly live performances are the most thrilling parts; I kept getting literal chills up and down the elevators of my spine throughout the Monterey Festival highlights, as well as the Stax/Volt Revue in London in 1967, where he reclaims "I've Been Loving You Too Long" and "Satisfaction" from the Rolling Stones with total confidence. Even as he's giving praise to Mick Jagger, he can't help coming off as a full-grown, fully mature and aware MAN in comparison to the geeky Stones. His versions of "Try A Little Tenderness" and "Respect," with tight, sophisticated backing by the Bar-Kays, would be astonishing and precious in any universe, even if they weren't recorded mere hours before the tragic plane crash in Wisconsin that killed him. By the end of the documentary, I was bawling uncontrollably, probably for the first time in many years over something that I wasn't directly involved with or feeling selfish about on some level. It's not that the story here was told sentimentally or was fishing for cheap and obvious emotions; it's that you feel



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such a deep loss merely by having the DVD end, much less recalling the cold-blooded rudeness of death permanently taking away such a musical giant, such a monumental, godlike voice belonging to such an unpretentiously likable soul. And I do mean soul.

**BONUSES:** There are more interviews with Jackson and Cropper, a photo gallery and a 22-page booklet with detailed liner notes and bio.

## Who's Been Talking? Johnny Thunders in Concert

(MVD Visual; www.MVDvisual.com)

I thought this would be a sad and depressing DVD since it documents one of Johnny Thunders' final shows, in Osaka, Japan, April 1991, not long before he died that same month. But it's actually quite enjoyable, catching Mr. Genzale on a good night with a good group. He appears to be alert and involved, and he and his backup band, the Oddballs, have even worked out some flashy, theatrical stage moves. Outrageously curvy singer Alison Gordy struts about charismatically, belting her parts with soul and exuding enough sumptuous sex appeal to lure any junkie away from drugs. Supportive guitarist Stevie Klasson plays off Thunders well, and saxophonist Jamey Heath adds some classy dips of sax. Thunders is in fine voice throughout, and his guitar playing is fiery and disciplined (when he bothers to pick up his ax, of course), and there are some absolutely ace versions of "You Can Walk My Dog" and "Pipeline" and a cool-grooving, slightly randy medley of "Louie Louie" and "Hang On, Sloopy," as well as the usual hits and covers. Thunders doesn't seem like a guy who's mortally ill, so it's a bit, well, heartbreaking when he sings "The only way you get respect is when you die" on "Disappointed," perhaps not realizing that he wouldn't get much respect when he died in suspicious circumstances a week or so later in New Orleans. Some folks still don't know that his final concert wasn't in Japan; it was a few days later at the Ecstasy club in Berlin, where he apparently was quite sick and had to cut his set very short, drawing abuse from "fans" who assumed he must be on drugs. My band was on tour in Germany and by coincidence performed at the Ecstasy a couple days later, right after he died. By all accounts, his last show was a mess, and a tragedy. I still can't reconcile the thought of drunken people throwing bottles at a possibly dying man. What a way to end a career. (And who really knows if Thunders was suffering from leukemia at the time, or was actually robbed and murdered in New Orleans? Or both?) Thunders was reportedly so sick, he had to be hospitalized at the start of the Japanese tour, so it's somewhat amazing that he sounds so lively here.

Maybe it was just another flash stage move from an underrated actor. The back of the DVD lists four songs (like "Gloria" and "Little Queenie") that aren't actually included, but the remaining 18 songs are a fun time, and not just for the morbidly obsessed.

**BONUSES:** Almost nothing, except for a short bio that helps make up for the lack of credits and liner notes.

