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REVIEW

Music DVD Review: Buddy Miles - *Changes*

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When [Buddy Miles](#) died on February 28th, 2008, it marked the passing of one of rock and roll's most flamboyant characters. Primarily known for his skill as a drummer, Buddy played with and for a who's who of rock and roll's elite as well as carving out a successful solo career as a band leader. Aside from the seventeen albums he recorded under his own name, he appeared on albums with Michael Bloomfield and Electric Flag, Gregg Allman, Carlos Santana (he was vocalist for Santana from 1979 - 84), and as the voice of the California Raisins.

He is most famous though for his association with Jimi Hendrix. He recorded a couple of songs with Jimi on *Electric Ladyland*, before becoming his permanent drummer in the Band Of Gypsies and recording the famous live New Year's Eve concert at Filmore East, *Band Of Gypsies*. Ironically his time with Jimi was limited to only a year before Jimi's management fired him. Billy still believes that the idea of an all black rock and roll band, Billy Cox was the bass player, made the record companies nervous at the time. They were probably scared it would have a negative impact on record sales.

Even though they only played together in a band for a year, Buddy first met Jimi when he was a guitarist for the Isley Brothers, and they were friends from that time onward. In an interview with Buddy on the soon to be released DVD *Changes*, distributed by [MVD Entertainment](#), Buddy talks about that first meeting with Jimi in Montreal, Canada, and their time together in the Band Of Gypsies, but also makes it clear that while playing with Jimi was special, there was more to his career than just that one year of his life. After watching the concert footage included on the *Changes* DVD you'll have to agree that although there is no denying the influence that Jimi had on his career and music, Buddy Miles also had his own voice and style.



Changes has footage from two of Buddy's concerts in the mid 1990's. The first is him with his band MST (Kevin Smith on guitar and Joe Thomas on bass) recorded at Alfred's Club in Switzerland in 1995. The second was recorded as part of fifteenth anniversary celebrations for the New Morning Club in Paris in 1996; Buddy is playing with the house band.

The concert recorded at Alfred's sees Buddy in his familiar spot behind the drum kit directing traffic. Although there's not that much traffic or need for direction as the three of them, Buddy, Kevin, and Joe, have a great rapport on stage. This segment of the DVD is twelve songs long and gives the viewer a really good idea of just how diverse a talent Buddy Miles was. While some of the material is standard power trio fodder, covers of the Beatles' "Come Together" and Hendrix's "Voodoo Child", others aren't what you'd normally expect to hear from this type of band; Stevie Wonder's "Superstition" and Sly Stone's "Take You Higher".

What these two songs did was allow him to show off just what he was capable of as a singer. On some of the hard rock songs, while accurate, his voice just didn't seem to be quite right, like he was forcing it to have the edge required by the material. So it was a nice surprise to hear how expressive he was able to be with more soulful numbers. While you begin to get some idea of what's in store on "Take You Higher", it was on his version of "Superstition" that you really appreciate his talents as a vocalist.



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