

Not that I hold up the aforementioned Rock & Roll Hall of Fame as any barometer of legitimacy, but any institution claiming to honor the greats of rock history must surely include Womack and Hayes (which it does), as well as Ike Turner (which it *sort of* does). The Hall's website includes an expansive bio and timeline under Hayes, while Ike & Tina Turner rate only a few paragraphs. Poster boy for abuse, both chemical and domestic, or not, such a true pioneer of rock deserved to be inducted on his own merits – as did Tina, for that matter. To add



insult to injury, Ike couldn't attend the festivities (even though he'd been eligible for induction since the Hall's inception), because he was serving a prison sentence for drug possession at the time.

Turner would deserve a wing in the Hall even if he never put out a record under his own name, thanks to his roles as producer, talent scout (furthering B.B. King's career and others) and sideman (recording with Howlin' Wolf, Otis Rush, Elmore James, and Albert King, to name a few).

When Turner got out of prison, much to his surprise, he discovered there was a bigger audience for his '50s Kings Of Rhythm material than for his later soul output. When his reformed, new Kings Of Rhythm filmed the DVD *Ike Turner & The Kings Of Rhythm Live In Concert* (MVD Visual) at 2002's North Sea Jazz Festival in The Netherlands, Turner was 70, but played with a zest for life and the energy of a man half his age.

With the unusual instrumentation of guitar, bass, drums, a three-man horn section, and *three* keyboard players, counting Ike, the band is as powerful as a locomotive and as tight as a hairpin turn. Guitar fans will be disappointed that Ike doesn't strap on his Strat more often, but not in what he plays when he does – with his trademark whammy-bar extremes.

The concert itself is solid, but bonus material filmed in Paris during the same tour is actually better. The real pay-off, though, is an "Early Years" documentary, with TV footage of his pre-Tina band of the '50s, and touching footage of Ike receiving the Memphis Heroes Award in '04. Following testimonials from Little Milton, the son of Sam Phillips (who recorded Ike's ground-breaking "Rocket 88" at Sun Studio), and, via video, B.B. King, Turner, who apparently thought he was asked to attend just to play a few songs, is moved to tears and nearly speechless.

All self-respecting R&B fans need to familiarize themselves with Ike Turner's *musical* journey, apart from any personal shortcomings, and this DVD is one step in that direction.

On Broadway, the term "triple threat" is used to describe a performer who can act, sing, and dance. Music's equivalent would be someone who can write, sing, and play. Throw in producing and arranging, and Bobby Womack, Isaac Hayes, and Ike Turner all qualify as *quadruple* threats. And I'm guessing Bobby still has a few dance moves in him.

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