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Torme, Bernie: Stratocaster Gypsy (DVD)

Bernie Torme has a pretty impressive resume, having played guitar with Ozzy Osbourne, Atomic Rooster, Gillan, Silver, Dee Snider's Desperado, as well as fronting his own solo band. *Stratocaster Gypsy* is a collection of video clips and live performances taken over the years that features Torme's blistering and raw style, fueled my manic whammy bar dive-bombs on his worn Fender Stratocaster guitar. In fact, raw is a good way to describe this DVD overall. Video purists will probably look very negatively at the bootleg quality of the sound and picture quality of much of this DVD-let's face it, the picture is pretty bad throughout, with colors way off, camera's in and out of focus, and the lighting generally washing out much of what was going on, especially on the live cuts. The sound is especially way too loud for the most part, especially the guitar, but if you are a fan of Torme then you might not complain too much about that aspect. The performances though are excellent-check out the live clips "Star", "Frontline", the rampaging "Turn Out the Lights", "Vampire" , and "Hardcore", all obviously taken from the same gig and featuring a hot band who were really on that night, especially Bernie. The video for "Shoorah Shoorah" is pretty bad quality, looking like it was taken from a 3rd or 4th generation source, and the song itself is a crunchy rocker despite stealing the riff from Free's "Wishing Well" and Bernie doing a bad lip-sync job.

Much of the music of Torme and his band around this time period (1980's) was a mix of hard rock, melodic hair metal, and punk, so you can imagine that there was plenty of attitude to be heard along with some spectacular musicianship. On occasion the band would throw in some atmospheric and moody rockers, here you get to check out "Mystery Train", one of their slower pieces that acts as a little breather from all the bombastic guitar rock that is represented on the DVD. One of my favorite clips here (from a song perspective anyway, cause the video is horrible) is the heavy "Arabia", a tune that features solid vocals (courtesy of Phil Lewis of LA Guns, who sings on most songs here) , crushing

riffs, steady rhythms, and wild lead guitar fills from Torme. Speaking of wild guitar from Torme, don't miss his extended solo spot, appropriately titled "Bernie's Guitar Extravaganza", filled with plenty of tortured whammy bar excursions, speedy scales, feedback, and two hand tapping. The guy's a skilled player, and uses every trick at his disposal to wow the audience, including his teeth ala Hendrix.

The obvious quality issue of the audio and video aside, this is pretty rare and wild stuff here that will no doubt need to be in the collection of every Bernie Torme fan out there. Those who have never heard the guitarist before might want to seek out one of his live CD's first to get a introduction to his music.

Track Listing
1) Ghost Walking
2) Star
3) Frontline
4) Turn Out the Lights
5) Hardcore
6) Shoorah Shoorah
7) Vampire
8) Turn Out the Lights 2
9) Mystery Train
10) Arabia
11) Mystery Train 2
12) Bernie's Guitar Extravaganza
13) The Beat
14) Bony Maroney-bonus
15) Wild West-bonus
16) Star-bonus
17) Getting There-bonus
Plus interview, biography, memorabilia, and photo gallery

Added: May 21st 2006
Reviewer: Pete Pardo
Score: ✯ ✯ ✯
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