

serious discussion of classic British rock, or of the Yardbirds specifically, will eventually devolve into heated arguments over which member of the electrified holy trinity deserves the title of the greatest guitar god. The subjects here don't argue; they provide insight through personal opinions on the merits of their band mates.

Dreja describes Clapton as the most professional guitarist from the outset, "practicing two notes for a whole day." Clapton calls Beck the most devoted guitarist he's ever seen and seems to be ascribing to Beck the attributes of a purist. Dreja meanwhile, points to Beck's willingness to explore wider tastes, with the sitar-sounding riff in "Heart Full of Soul". Page's playing is referenced much later in comparison, and some imply he may have been the most versatile performer of the three.

Although the included performances are frustratingly truncated and often interrupted, they nevertheless prove brilliant. Notable and numerous clips from the pre-Page, Jeff Beck years like "I Wish You Would", "I'm A Man" and a menacing "Still I'm Sad" on TV shows in 1965 serve as must-see highlights. Also of note, the frenetic energy of a *Shindig!* gig at the 1965 Richmond Jazz and Blues Festival where the sound was a mess but the fans went mental anyway and the 1966 *NME* Pollwinners performance of "Train Kept a Rollin'" arguably could be the best clip featured.

Footage of the dual-guitar onslaught once Jimmy Page joined the band are understandably sparse because Beck split shortly after. A few glimpses into the group as a four-piece, with Page reaching toward what he would later achieve with Led Zeppelin, wrap up the Yardbirds as a band, and the documentary devotes the last ten minutes to the formation of Zeppelin and the accidental death of Relf.

The Story of the Yardbirds has just one bonus feature, but it's a great one. The complete Yardbirds' appearance on the *Beat Beat Beat* television program from Frankfurt in 1967 has perfect sound and picture, not to mention amazing performances. With "Shapes of Things", "Happenings Ten Years Time Ago", "Over Under Sideways Down" and "I'm a Man" (featuring incendiary harmonica and riveting vocals from Relf and close-ups of Page's bow work) clocking in at just under 15-minutes, this bonus provides reason enough in itself to seek out the DVD.

RATING:  6

EXTRAS:  7

— 7 January 2009

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