

**THE SMALL FACES**  
**UNDER REVIEW (AN INDEPENDENT CRITICAL ANALYSIS)** (MUSIC VIDEO DISTRIBUTORS)



Contrary to popular myth, the Who were not mods. They were punks. After playing a set, they famously smashed their instruments in a violent, spectacular negation (or send-up) of their own musicality. By contrast, the Small Faces simply

looked smashing. And, in measured contrast to the Who's explosive roughhousing, they housed their raw energy in a perfect containment of pop intensity—as though their musical infrastructure had bomb-proof walls. But, most important of all, it was the Small Faces that were the true mods.

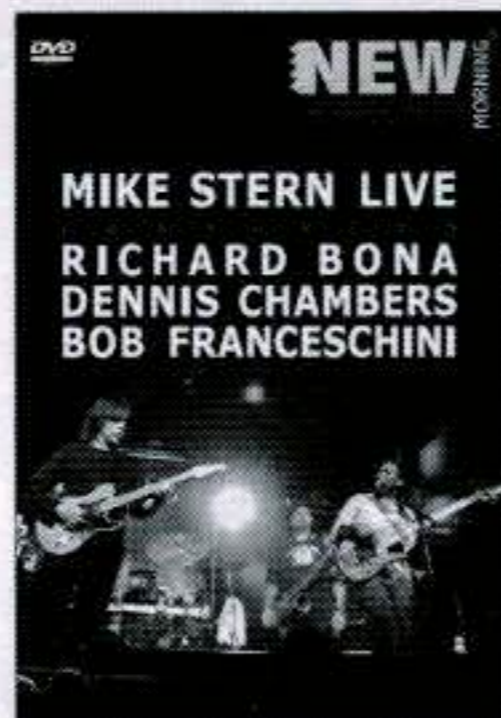
Of course, an authentic mod is hard to define; the movement was symptomatic and accouterment-based, comprising everything from Mopeds to working-class pride to a love of American soul music. At worst, the mods were like ancestral yuppies on speed, or epitomized by the humorless arrogance of a Paul Weller, or nasty permutations like hateful skinheads and the Droogs in *A Clockwork Orange*. But the Small Faces put mod in the best light possible. Indeed, many have accused them of being just that: light. But songs such as the lilting "Itchycoo Park" and "Lazy Sunday Afternoon" achieved the task of being sing-along, drink-along anthems that depicted the English working class better than those of any of their peers. While the Kinks recorded wry, detached observations of the British bourgeois that were critical but oddly objective, the Small Faces sang about their own simple lives: trying not to be harassed by the neighbors on a drunken Sunday, walking stoned through a storybook park—basically being "ravers" in the land of prudes. Half of their hits were intoxicated nursery rhymes; the other half were larger-than-life soul. Steve Marriott's power chords could shoot the canonized Pete Townshend halfway to the moon, and he sang like a black man twice his age. His songwriting (along with Ronnie Lane's) was pure mod poetry.

Oddly titled (since the DVD isn't for pop scholars so much as future fans), the documentary interlaces live performances with critical commentary. One writer proclaims that the band was the quintessential '60s combo, more

worthy of wearing that decade as an emblem than even the Stones or the Beatles. The critics are all British, which, rather than biasing them, makes them more qualified to discuss the band's cultural roots than, say, David Fricke. And though they were British from head to toe (which, for these very small Faces, means just over five feet), the combo's music was quite an influence across the ocean on American power-pop. The Raspberries' "Tonight" is nothing if not a passionate remake of the Small Faces' "Tin Soldier." The Pop's "Down on the Boulevard" has a pronounced Small Faces imprint. And back in England, the group's image is reflected in everyone from the obscure Gorillas to the Jam and their ilk, to everyone's favorite pop whimsicists, XTC. You can't throw a rock ('n' roll) without it hitting a band that loves the Small Faces.

Never outstaying its welcome, this 60-minute documentary is barely longer than the Small Faces' own blink-and-you-missed-it career. It curiously lacks any interview segments with the group itself—but, after all, they spoke loud and clear through their music. And best of all, it's full of rare and raucous performances, both live onstage and in a song-illustrative form that portends the modern music video. (Disappointingly, its "bonus features" are for reading, not watching.) But though the band's been shortchanged in the history books—which makes the historians look far worse than the group itself—this DVD goes a long way in saving Face(s). | **Jordan Oakes**

**MIKE STERN | MIKE STERN LIVE – THE PARIS CONCERT** (INAKUSTIK)



Mike Stern is one of those guys who never ceases to amaze, his music capable of being upbeat and deep at the same time. His new DVD is a 2004 live recording from Paris, and features Stern teamed up with singer/bassist Richard Bona, and one of my all-time

favorite drummers, Dennis Chambers. Stern intertwines and doubles melodies at will with brilliant tenor saxophonist Bob Franceschini. They create some beautiful harmonies made of rich and colorful blends of chord tones. There are also a couple of bonus tracks with Dave Weckl on drums and Bob Berg on sax.

Mike Stern has come a long way since his debut with Miles Davis. The years spent

mastering the expressiveness of the guitar as a chordal and melodic instrument has developed into his ability to communicate an enlightened human connection to us all. | **Derek Lauer**

**POISON**  
**SEVEN DAYS LIVE** (CHERRY RED)



Poison, one of the '80s' premiere glam rock acts, has released *Seven Days Live*, a live DVD of a 1993 concert in London's Hammersmith Apollo theater. To begin, let me clue you in that I am a huge Poison fan. Knowing full

well the amount of energy and passion in every Poison show, I was more than excited to review this DVD.

I soon realized that this video was not going to be the all-out drug-and-sex fest that I was hoping to observe. Instead, it consists of only concert footage; there are no extras included. No backstage shenanigans, no footage of the band partying with the locals and then throwing up, no comedic outtakes, no hordes of scantily clad women vying for the band's attention, and most disappointingly, no footage of the band hooking up with their shifty friends to get "the stuff." Then the other shoe dropped: Richie Kotzen is in the band. Poison is and always will be Bret, Bobby, Rikki, and C.C. This must have been filmed after the band kicked C.C. out and let Kotzen take over the reins.

The concert footage itself does a fine job representing what a Poison concert feels like. Despite some shabby camera shots, the music and energy is undeniably Poison. They pulled out several of their hits, including "Ride the Wind," "Look What the Cat Dragged in," and "Talk Dirty to Me," allowing me to turn a blind eye to some of their not so impressive songs. The majority of the 15 songs included—complete with an extended drum solo—do help the Poison fanatic relive the band's glory days.

*Seven Days Live* triumphs in showing how this band keeps on rocking no matter what trend the music industry latches onto, but it fails to give the true blue Poison fan any new information. The only new thing I learned is that London has its fair share of trappy girls with gnarly teeth and an overabundance of men with mullets. The Midwest and London have more in common than I realized. | **Jim Campbell**