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MUSIC



Bill Carrier, Courtesy of Stax Records

Otis Redding performing in Oslo at the Stax/Volt Revue tour of Europe in 1967. Black-and-white footage of the concert will be shown on PBS.

A New PBS Special Revisits the Stax/Volt Revue's 1967 European Tour

By [JON PARELES](#)
Published: January 2, 2009

Seeing the brash Southerners who forged Memphis soul music at Stax Records must have been a startling experience for audiences on the 1967 Stax/Volt Revue tour of Europe.

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Dapper and raw, hard-working and audacious, rooted in gospel while exulting in sensuality, Stax stars like [Otis Redding](#) and Sam & Dave were song-and-dance men who knew how to bring audiences to their feet. Their band — Booker T. and the M.G.'s plus the Mar-Keys as the horn section — was racially integrated and musically unstoppable.

The black-and-white concert footage of “Sweet Soul Music: Stax Live in Europe 1967,” to be shown Monday at 8 p.m. on WLIW (Channel 21) and nationwide on [PBS](#) in March, is a chance to see Stax’s soul men at their youthful peak; Redding would die in a plane crash later in 1967. The concert also shows African-American culture raising a ruckus on staid foreign turf.

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Bill Carrier, Courtesy of Stax Records

Dave Prater, left, and Sam Moore are featured in "Sweet Soul Music: Stax Live in Europe 1967," a concert film to be broadcast nationwide on PBS in March.

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Bill Carrier, Courtesy of Stax Records

Booker T. Jones, seated, and from left, Steve Cropper, Al Jackson and Lewis Steinberg.

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Bill Carrier, Courtesy of Stax Records

The Mar-Keys: from left, Andrew Love on saxophone, Wayne Jackson on trumpet and Packy Axton on tenor saxophone.

Stax Records did not choose timid singers. The tour lineup was all belters — Redding, Sam & Dave, Eddie Floyd and Arthur Conley — who bounced percussive phrases off the band's unswerving beat. They were R&B troupers from an era when performers didn't need to lip-sync when they danced. The Stax singers commanded the stage with moves no choreographer taught them, and they didn't rest until their audience became an ecstatic congregation.

The revue was videotaped for television on April 7, 1967, in Oslo. (The PBS special is a shorter version of a DVD, "Stax/Volt Revue: Live in Norway 1967," which is available from the Stax Museum in Memphis, staxmuseum.org.) The Norwegian audience, which gets generous camera time throughout, looks earnestly appreciative as Booker T. and the M.G.'s steam into "Green Onions," with Steve Cropper flicking out vicious jabs of blues guitar. When the singers take over, they don't settle for head-bobbing and hand-clapping as a response. One after another, they knock themselves out. Just about every song ratchets itself up, drops back down and then pushes toward a double-time gospelly surge over the top.

Mr. Conley praises fellow soul singers in "Sweet Soul Music," twitching and hopping across the stage, insisting that the audience call out names like James Brown. Mr. Floyd, moving with a backwards, gliding step that looks oddly balletic, revs up the crowd during "Raise a Hand" until it swarms toward the stage, to be restrained by uniformed security guards. Mr. Floyd calls the men in uniform "soldiers on the front line" before inviting them to join in.

But they are only warm-ups for Sam & Dave and for Redding. Sam & Dave, flaunting the contrast and blend

between Sam Moore's pearly tenor and Dave Prater's rugged baritone, volley vocal lines while they shimmy, twirl and strut all over the place. One well-chosen camera shot, amid the otherwise workmanlike direction of the old TV footage, shows the duo's dancing feet alongside the synchronized steps of the Mar-Keys. During "Soothe Me," even the TV crew succumbs to the frenzy; the camera starts swooping in and out, as if Sam & Dave were singing "Zoom Me."

Redding would "slosh through puddles of Sam & Dave's sweat to get out to the stage," says the trumpeter Wayne Jackson in an on-screen interview, "and then he would add a gallon of his own sweat to the lake." Redding arrives with a huge smile to sing about sorrow in "Fa-Fa-Fa-Fa (Sad Song)." He sounds plaintive and then exultant in "My Girl," accelerates into overdrive for "Shake," matches Al Jackson's rat-a-tat drumming with stamping footwork in "Satisfaction" and carries "Try a Little Tenderness" from bluesy concern to soul catharsis.

To the bewilderment of the M.C., Redding struts offstage and returns again and again and again, barking out the chorus while the band slams away and the crowd seizes the chance to rush the stage. Moments later the show is over, and the Norwegian audience decorously files out — wondering, perhaps, what had just hit it.

This article has been revised to reflect the following correction:

Correction: January 8, 2009

Picture captions on Saturday with a music column about a film from the 1967 Stax/Volt Revue tour of Europe that was broadcast on WLIW, using information provided by the



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station, misidentified several performers. The identities were reversed for the picture of Sam Moore and Dave Prater (Sam & Dave). Mr. Prater was on the left and Mr. Moore on the right. In the picture of Booker T. Jones and three members of his band, the man at the right was Lewis Steinberg, not Donald Dunn. In a picture of a saxophone player and the trumpeter Wayne Jackson, the saxophonist was Andrew Love, not Floyd Newman.

A version of this review appeared in print on January 3, 2009, on page C1 of the New York edition with the headline: Raising a Soulful Ruckus on Foreign Turf.

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