

Tuesday, November 11, 2008

Convergence Zone
The NWsource weblog

NWsource SIFF pick: 'George Michael – A Different Story'

By Sheri Quirt
June 5, 2006
NWsource staff



More info:
'George Michael – A Different Story'
Get SIFF tickets

 Printer friendly

 E-mail a friend

 Dig it

RSS for Convergence Zone

Remember that guy who put the boom-boom into our hearts? Who famously set his monkey free in a public restroom in Beverly Hills? Who single-handedly elevated facial stubble to an art form?

They really should have included him the 2005 UK documentary "[George Michael – A Different Story](#)"; he would have made things a hell of a lot more fun.

The film gets off to a pleasing start, cannily priming the audience with cheery nostalgia: prehistoric "Top of the Pops" footage and video clips that made all in attendance hoot with affection at how ridiculous they (we) had looked back then. A late-model Michael (VG+) fondly assesses [Wham!](#)'s image as "[consistently naïf](#)," yet grouses about how no one could get past the visuals to take his artistry seriously. His solution: Following his solo debut, the 1987 blockbuster "Faith," the singer abruptly retired from promotion of any kind and began specializing in the bombastic, self-indulgent wrist-slashers that have become his stock-in-trade. His catalog since is a collection of increasingly ponderous bummer's redeemed by the occasional catchy dance track.

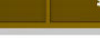
And thus we downshift into sobriety. Michael in black clothes and dark glasses sitting on a couch avoiding eye contact, a cursory release of his life's highs and lows, and a few concert highlights. There isn't much here to engage the non-fan nor reward the devotee; the film presupposes a degree of familiarity with the singer's backstory, yet it doesn't probe uncharted territory. After 93 minutes, the only new things I had learned were that he has an annoying nervous tic of rubbing his nose and that he patronizes Starbucks — telltale fat green straws poke out of venti cups in scene after scene. Michael is at his most genuine when the topic is Anseimo, his partner who died of AIDS in 1993; the singer can still barely speak of him, pausing repeatedly to fight back tears. His new love, a genial meathead from Texas, seems to make him happy, but his clearly second-marriage material.

The usual suspects are on hand for color commentary. Elon John provides the attaboys from behind cool blue spec lenses; a sulky Boy George is unabashedly bitter over his relegation to *Baby Jane Hudson* status while Michael remains the critics' choice. Simon Cowell's presence lends some 21st century credibility, but what is Mariah Carey doing there? Doesn't this guy have any other friends?

Michael's obvious insecurities make all the more maddening his pose as a pompous know-it-all. At several moments I wanted to leap to my feet and shout at the screen. "You arrogant ass!" I am certain this urge was not unique to me. But for the rest of the night, his haunting concert vocal of "Jesus to a Child" would not leave my mind. Onstage, Michael connects in a way he doesn't in interviews or in the cool, tightly controlled atmosphere of the studio. For a man who abhors performing live, he's brilliant at it. Those moments made me forgive the rest, as confounding as it was. Perhaps the valuable reminder to take from "A Different Story" is that the product of an artist's talent is all we as consumers are entitled to. It's a pleasant bonus if one is a lovely person or a profound soul, but as long as they're delivering the goods, do we really need—or want—to know the rest of the story?

"George Michael – A Different Story" screens at Pacific Place on June 9 at 2 p.m. See the [Seattle International Film Festival](#) website for more information.

Copyright © 2008 The Seattle Times Company

DMITRIY'S <i>103.3 the valley</i> EST. 1979	Chocolate <i>Soulful R&B with a touch of Hip-Hop</i> November 11-12	Rick Braun - Tribute to Chet Baker with Brian Bromberg, Philippe Saisse and Ricky Lawson <i>Contemporary Trumpet Sensation</i> November 13-16	Tuck and Patti <i>Acoustic Guitar and Voice Duo, celebrating 30 years!</i> November 18-20	Taj Mahal Trio <i>Master of Blues and Roots Music</i> November 21-23, 25-30	Guitars and Saxes <i>Christmas featuring Richard E. Roth, Paul Brown and Jessy J</i> December 4-7	FREE PARKING ALL AGES Gift Certificates Available (804) 441-9729
						

How's your Credit Score?
0-500 Poor, 501-700 Average, 701+ Good. Find out your score now FREE!

www.creditreport.com

www.creditreport.com
AARP Auto Ins Quotes
Over 50? Save \$363 On Auto Ins With The Hartford. Free
No Hassle Quote

AARP.TheHartford.com

Tighten your Tummy!
Learn how I lost 32lbs fast and safely. You can too!
www.momsweightloss.com/Success

Tighten your Tummy!