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Good Times (DVD) Review

By Britt Gillette

Nominated for three Golden Globes, Good Times premiered in mid-season 1974 to widespread

critical acclaim and audience popularity. A spin-off of the Bea Arthur (of Golden Girls fame) sitcom Maude (1972), Good Times became the fourth of five highly successful sitcoms brought into being during the 1970's decade by Norman Lear. In addition to Maude, those sitcoms were All In The Family (1971), Sanford & Son (1972), and The Jeffersons (1975). The second of three to focus exclusively on African-American family life, Good Times became a source for groundbreaking social commentary in compliment to its penchant for hilarious family comedy...

Good Times centers around the lives of James (John Amos) and Florida Evans (Esther Rolle), an African-American couple raising their three children in a Chicago housing development. Eldest son J.J. (Jimmie Walker) is a skinny, wisecracking ladies man with an affinity for painting. Middle child Thelma (BernNadette Stanis) plays the role of moderating influence on the passions of her two brothers, while youngest son Michael (Ralph Carter) is always involved in a cause to help others or end an injustice. The family is often visited by Florida's best friend from high school, Willona (Ja'net DuBois), who also lives in the project. In later seasons, she's accompanied by adopted daughter Penny (Janet Jackson). With additional comic relief provided by overweight super Nathan Bookman (Johnny Brown), Good Times is a family-oriented TV series laden with great one-liners and plenty of laugh-tracks...

The Good Times DVD (Season 1) features a number of hilarious episodes including the series premiere "Too Old Blues" in which James is exciting at the prospect of being hired for a high-paying job. But while at the interview, James learns that the training program for the job only accepts qualified applicants aged 18-35. At 42, he's too old for the job. Meanwhile, Florida and the kids have put together a surprise party unaware that James was rejected... Other notable episodes from Season 1 include "Getting Up the Rent" in which the Evans family is faced with an eviction notice, prompting each member to devise a scheme for coming up with the necessary cash, and "The Visitor" in which Michael's letter-to-the-editor about the housing conditions at the Evans' project merits a visit from a housing commission official who experiences the squalor firsthand...

Below is a list of episodes included on the Good Times (Season 1) DVD:

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Episode 1 (Too Old Blues) Air Date: 02-08-1974 Episode 2 (Black Jesus) Air Date: 02-15-1974
Episode 3 (Getting Up the Rent) Air Date: 02-22-1974 Episode 4 (God's Business is Good Business)
Air Date: 03-01-1974 Episode 5 (Michael Gets Suspended) Air Date: 03-08-1974 Episode 6 (Sex and
the Evans Family) Air Date: 03-15-1974 Episode 7 (Junior Gets a Patron) Air Date: 03-22-1974
Episode 8 (Junior the Senior) Air Date: 03-29-1974 Episode 9 (The Visitor) Air Date: 04-05-1974
Episode 10 (Springtime in the Ghetto) Air Date: 04-19-1974 Episode 11 (The TV Commercial) Air
Date: 04-26-1974 Episode 12 (The Check Up) Air Date: 05-03-1974 Episode 13 (My Son the Lover)
Air Date: 05-10-1974

Britt Gillette is author of The DVD Report (

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), a blog where you can find

more reviews like this one.

Recordable DVD formats explained

By Kenny Hemphill

Recordable DVD formats explained by Kenny Hemphill

Picking your way through the ton of information available on recordable DVD formats can be a nightmare. To help you out, we've done our best to distill it into this summary.

There are five recordable versions of DVD; DVD-R for General, DVD-R for Authoring, DVD-RAM, DVD-RW, and DVD+RW. None of the formats is fully compatible with the other although there are drives which will read, and in some cases write to more than one format.

DVD-R for General and DVD-R for Authoring are essentially DVD versions of CD-R. And DVD-RW is a DVD version of CD-RW. All three formats can be read in standard DVD-ROM drives and in most DVD video players. The difference between DVD-R for General and DVD-R for Authoring is that DVD-R for General is a format intended for widespread consumer use and doesn't support 'professional' features such as piracy protection or duplication in mass duplicators. The Pioneer DVD-RW drive which is the most popular PC device for writing to DVD uses the DVD for General format. And as the case with CD, DVD-RW is essentially the same as DVD-R except that it can be erased and written to again and again.

DVD-RAM is slightly different as it is a sector based disc which mounts on the desktop of a PC when inserted into a drive. Files can then be copied to it in the same way as any other mounted media. Some single-sided DVD-RAM discs can be removed from their caddy and inserted in a DVD-ROM drive which will then be able to read the content of the disc.

There are DVD video recorders which use the DVD-RAM format. This enables them to pull off clever

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tricks like timeshifting - where you can watch the beginning of a programme you have recorded while you are still recording the end on the same disc.

DVD+RW is the newest format and not supported by the DVD Forum, the body which sets the standards for DVD. However, it is supported by some of the biggest electronics and computer manufacturers, and is therefore likely to stick around.

It is also the format used by Philips in its DVD video recorders. Despite not being authorised by the DVD Forum, DVD+RW is claimed by its supporter to be compatible with more DVD video players than DVD-R and DVD+RW writers are found in PCs from quite a few manufacturers.

Kenny Hemphill is the editor and publisher of

The HDTV Tuner



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