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KATY PERRY



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'You Really Got Me' Really, Really Got to Me

By [Jake Meaney](#) 17 June 2010

In looking around for ideas on how to start this piece, I turned, as I usually do for music related reviews, to the ever indispensable All Music Guide. I needed a quick refresher on some of the details of the history of The Kinks, since the program I am reviewing, ostensibly a biography of the band, actually failed to provide any.

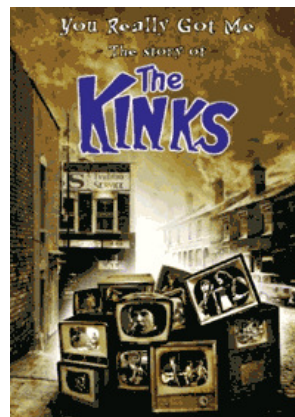
Perusing Stephen Thomas Erlewine's typically excellent entry on the band, passages in it started to ring familiar. Not just the story of the band, but the actual words, exactly, in order, verbatim. Was I imagining that I'd recently heard these, or was it just déjà vu from having read this same entry years ago?

I went back to the tape, and it doesn't lie: the narration from *You Really Got Me* is lifted word for word from Erlewine's piece, and worse, his entry is not credited *anywhere* on the DVD. It was shocking but, in retrospect, not all that surprising: everything that went into the production of this program is cribbed from another source. Still, this pushed it over the edge – already teetering on the verge of travesty when regarded just on its own "merits", it slips fully over into farce with this blatant case of plagiarism.

If any band is deserving of hagiographic critical treatment, it's The Kinks. Perennially an also-ran when taken in the mix with their titanic British Invasion peers, The Kinks were for a solid stretch in the mid-to-late '60s the equals to the Beatles and Stones in terms of songwriting, even if widespread popularity (especially in America) eluded them. Their influence has been diffuse and far-reaching, informing (and some say even birthing) genres as diverse as heavy metal, punk, British New Wave, and mid-'90s Britpop. Occupying a permanent middle ground somewhere between cult act and rock n' roll icons, The Kinks seem always to be hip outsiders, having had enough success to be well known, but enough mystery to retain a certain cachet that allowed them never to become so ubiquitous that they were taken for granted.

The story of the band itself – the internecine, filial squabbling between Davies and his brother; the fateful ban from touring America in the mid-'60s, which proved both boon and bane to their success; and the commercial resurgence in the late '70s and '80s – deserves to finally be told in full. Unfortunately, for Kinks fans, they'll have to wait a bit longer, since *You Really Got Me* is not the rock bio they've been waiting for.

Poorly edited, badly (and plagiaristically) narrated, and boasting just plain ugly picture quality, the program just plain sucks – there's no better way to put it. If a more unappealing and hapless rock bio



You Really Got Me: The Story of The Kinks

Director: [n/a](#)

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exists, I haven't seen it. Those expecting the standard "Behind the Music"-esque treatment will be shocked to find that there's nothing here at all about the personal stories of Ray Davies, or his brother Dave, or the rest of the band; or any background on how the band formed, or how the songs were written, or what the songs mean, or their legacy and influence. It's supposed to be about the music, man! Any critical appraisal of it, however, is in short supply...

There is actual music aplenty, don't you worry. The program adopts the generally noble strategy of letting the music speak for itself, so long (very long) stretches are comprised of live footage, most of it lifted directly from the already extant *One for the Road* concert DVD, and most of the selections are from the band's '70s output, which aren't the first that spring to mind when regarding The Kinks.

Their classic songs, the bedrock on which their reputation is built, are almost dismissively glossed over. There are stray clips here and there of "You Really Got Me", or "Sunny Afternoon", or "Waterloo Sunset", but for the most part, their biggest and best songs are notable for their absence ("Lola", their big comeback hit in the US, isn't even mentioned), to the point where I wonder if there were some copyright issues with the band's '60s record label.

Kinks devotees may have some passing interest in footage from a very early performance in what looks like a gymnasium at a dance or something. They tear through a suite of songs, both originals and covers, and while this is interesting from a historical perspective, the performance is lacking in the volatile energy that the band soon after developed.

As the program's long 900 minutes ticked excruciatingly by, I started to wonder who exactly this DVD was for. Surely, hardcore fans will be nothing but insulted by such a grotesque hatchet job. Anyone with passing curiosity in the band will wonder what any of the fuss is about, since the band we see presented here is not really the band of legend.

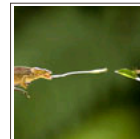
At times, I wondered if this was some sort of attempt at reviving and revising the history of later ('70s-'80s) Kinks material. This part of their career certainly has been overlooked and is not without merit, and the narrator, when he does break from reading directly from the All Music script, tends to heap generous praise on some forgotten albums and songs. Unfortunately, it makes a hash of all that too, content to rattle off boring facts about lineup changes in the touring band and label jumping.

If any good came out of this, it made me go straight to the source and dust off my own collection of old Kinks records, which I'd laboriously assembled throughout the '90s, when my own obsession with the band was at its peak. It also sent me scrambling to dig out my copy of Ray Davies' pseudo-auto-biography *X-Ray*, which stands as one of the great overlooked rock biographies, and should be the main entry point for anyone looking to learn more about the band (for best results, read it with brother Dave Davies' hilarious rebuttal memoir, which was released a year after his brother's).

Just please, I implore you, if you are a Kinks fan, or wanting to learn more about them, steer very wide and clear of this – how can I put it delicately – piece of utter and absolute crap. It's just total junk, an abomination that should never have been greenlit, let alone seen the light of day.

Rating:          

PM PICKS



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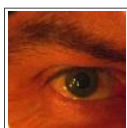
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- 10** - The Best of the Best
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