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John Lennon—*Rare and Unseen*

(Wienerworld Presentations)

Paul McCartney—*Paul McCartney Really is Dead: The Last Testament of George Harrison*

(Highway 61 Films)

The Rolling Stones—*Rare and Unseen*

(Wienerworld Presentations)

The Rolling Stones—*1969-1974: The Mick Taylor Years*

(Sexy Intellectual Productions)

Eric Clapton—*The 1960s Review*

(Sexy Intellectual Productions)

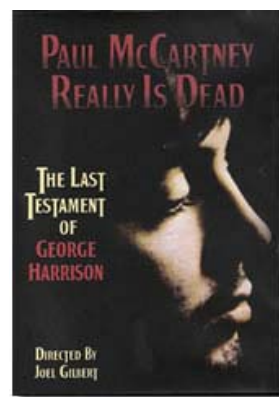
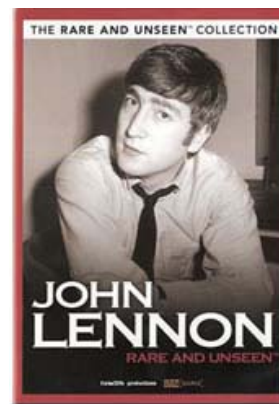
The Kinks—*You Really Got Me: The Story of the Kinks*

(ABC Entertainment)

There may never be another period in rock to rival the British Invasion. From 1964 to 1966, it seemed like the UK could do nothing but launch one fantastic Beat band after another, delivering them all to our shores in rapid, head-spinning succession. Today even nonagenarians and kids know the wave was spearheaded by the Beatles, who were quickly followed by the Animals, the Dave Clark Five, the Searchers, Gerry and the Pacemakers, and dozens more, each one bringing its own idiosyncratic, swinging English concoction of American R&B, pop, and rock 'n' roll.

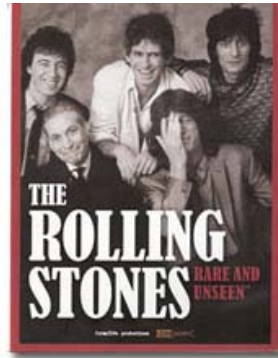
Fittingly, then, we'll start this fab DVD round-up with two Beatles-related titles. The John Lennon *Rare and Unseen* disc mainly consists of television interviews and specials interspersed with commentary by Beatles press officer Tony Barrow, Len Goodman of the (pre-Beatles) Quarrymen, and "fan" Phil Collins. Pretty cool for Lennon lovers, but one wishes the source shows weren't so cut up. It's hard to decide whether *Paul McCartney Really is Dead* is more hilarious or painful. Building on the age-old myth that McCartney was killed in car crash and replaced by a doppelganger ("to prevent mass suicides of Beatles fans"), producer Joel Gilbert claims to have been mailed a deathbed tape of George Harrison confessing to all of this and insisting Lennon was murdered to keep the secret safe. The result: a Harrison impersonator with a laughably fake accent delivering a litany of "clues" hidden in songs and album covers. Something to fuel many a doob-infused dorm-room controversy hang. No surprise Gilbert was also behind the ridiculous *Bob Dylan's Jesus Years* doc reviewed here previously.

The Beatles' biggest rivals were, of course, the Rolling Stones, whose likewise-*unauthorized Rare and Unseen* is more problematic than the above Lennon installment.

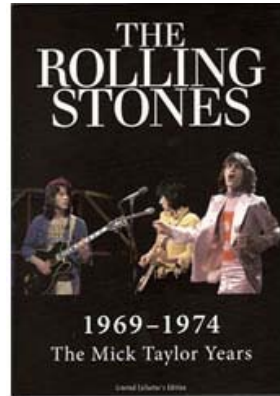


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With zero narrative, it strings together interviews and

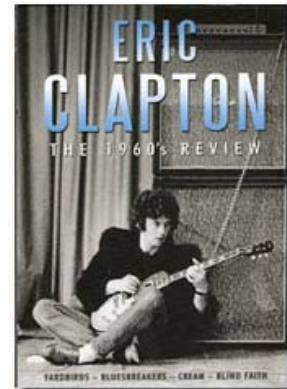


footage from all periods of the Stones' career, and is haphazard but still worth a look—mostly for the scarce early '60s segment filmed in Ireland. Concentrating on what was, arguably, the Stones' greatest period, 1969-1974: *The Mick Taylor Years* chronicles the guitarist's tenure and his contributions. Although Taylor himself is hardly interviewed, it's gratifying to see the fame-eschewing ex-Stone get some well-deserved props. Commentators include Bluesbreakers leader John Mayall and author Alan Clayson.

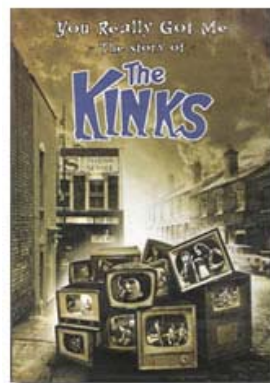


As far as Brit guitar heroes go, Eric Clapton is certainly much better known than Taylor. Per its title, *The 1960s Review* covers Slowhand's peak years with the Yardbirds, the Bluesbreakers, Cream, and Blind Faith. Like the Taylor DVD, it features less talk from the subject himself and more from Mayall and Clayson, along with Yardbirds Chris Dreya and Top Topham, and Cream drummer Ginger Baker and producer Bill Halverson. The live footage is good evidence as to why, despite Clapton's being a career maverick, his best music by far happened when he was embedded in the above great bands.

The Kinks were perhaps the most underrated—and definitely the most quintessentially English—band of the era, and have been long overdue for a great film validating their place as a group that uniquely blended R&B, British music hall, folk, country, proto-punk/metal guitar, and poetic introspection. Unfortunately, *You Really Got Me* is not that film. With a stiff voiceover and maybe the worst editing of all time, it loosely cobbles performance clips (most great, admittedly) and chopped-off interviews with bandleader Ray Davies, eschewing any timeline as it thoughtlessly jumps around. Did any one bother to watch this before it



was released? For cool Kinks clips "YouTube Really Got Me" is still king.—Peter Aaron



John Lennon and the Rolling Stones Rare and Unseen, Paul McCartney, the Kinks: www.mvdivisual.com; *Eric Clapton, the Rolling Stones 1969-1974: The Mick Taylor Years:* www.chromedreams.co.uk.

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