



[The Beatles](#): Their Golden Age

Written and Narrated by Les Krantz

MVD Visual - MVD5397D (DVD)

Available from [MVD Entertainment Group](#).

A review written for the Folk & Acoustic Music Exchange
by **Mark S. Tucker**
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Les Krantz is the publisher of the Facts That Matter line of books and himself an author. He is not, however, a voice-over artist nor does he seem to know much about recording technology, as the miking and engineering on this narrative is pretty sophomoric, with the volume level more than once almost indecipherable. Likewise, the intro music, the loop playing when you choose to run the film or select chapters, is a tad bizarre, seemingly undecided between Beatles riffs and cinema intermission sonics. Such factors would normally be annoying, but in the case of *The Beatles: Their Golden Age*, much of the footage presented, a good deal of which I'd never seen before (more than a little of it of BBC vintage), is way cool, so that that the visuals mostly override everything.

One has to suspect Frantz took Casey Kasem as his model, the cadence and pitch of his delivery indicate it. Kasem was kind of a weasel, an accidentally recorded infamous classic studio tantrum revealed that for all time, but Frantz seems to be more the fanboy and geek. This accounts for the perspicacity shown in footage selection, above which refrains of ever more quasi-familiar songs appear, this time pointedly Beatles-esque, corruptions of well-known tracks that'll probably have Beatles maniacs digging the amusing cross between cheezoid and cool, grinning from ear to ear. For those unaware of the fact, however: if you cop original music, you have to pay through the nose for it, so smart documentarians opt for simulations, and, in fact, at no point is any note of actual Beatles music ever presented. That can be problematic when you're watching them play and hearing no part of it.

It's hard to imagine a time when kids went so psychotically apeshit for a musical entity—well, not all that difficult, really, if one came up through Presleymania, but still, the fever pitch of teen adulation for the Liverpool lads was intense, a case study in true hysteria, offset by the Fab Four's perpetual clowning and good spirits. Thus, what we're studying here, though it's not quite presented that way, is psycho-social, not musical. By the time the hour-long *Golden Age* is half over, however, things have settled down significantly. Drugs, only very glancingly referred to, had entered the scene, everyone had progressed through a number of years, and the whole vibe mellowed significantly. The second part of the film, then, is given to an overview of the Beatles' film oeuvre but mostly just through Frantz erasing the old studio-inserted patter in ancient ads, promo, and prompt spots and substituting his own.

As said, a good deal of time is spent in running very interesting old newscasts and such, but the triteness of the scripting, the constantly varying volume and clarity of the recitation, and the complete lack of any Beatles' sounds other than their voices in interviews tends to get a trifle tedious, superficial. Overall, *Golden Age* is probably a decent G-rated intro for new young'uns but will likely find indifferent appeal overall to Boomers and ilk. Les Frantz really needs to devote a lot more time to the idea of coherent thematics, to the mechanics involved in all aspects of film-making, and to his voice. I mean, you remember what a huge influence Casey Kasem was on rock and roll, don't you? Whaaaaat? You don't?? Well, that's my point...but at least the smirky, goeey, condescending son of a bitch was professional.

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