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Eric Clapton - The 1960's Review

By Todd Totale
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Eric Clapton - *The 1960's Review* (Sexy Intellectual)

When I was growing up, **Eric Clapton** was always held in high esteem by my father, and he instilled in me an almost immediate respect for the guitarist. He taught me that bands like **Cream** and **Blind Faith** were more than just rock bands, they were "super groups."

In terms of Clapton's own legacy, the sole record Clapton did with **John Mayall's Bluesbreakers** became Dad's ultimate go-to record as proof of Eric's dexterity.

"You know that someone spray painted 'Clapton is God' on a wall because of his playing on 'Beano,'" he'd tell me, before explaining the meaning of "Beano." For years, I thought the Mayall/Clapton Bluesbreakers was actually called "Beano" and became dismayed when I could never find the album of the same name.

Since I was prewired to appreciate Clapton, there was almost an instinctual attraction toward a new documentary on his early years. The unauthorized dvd, *The 1960's Review*, focuses on the guitarist's formative years, when his talent was untarnished by later career decisions that undermined the man's credibility.

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The two-hour documentary tracks Clapton's early years through the use of archival footage and interviews with various musicians who were near the events. A large part of the interviews come from expert biographers and music journalists. Director Alan Westbrook does bring up a few archival Clapton interview bits, ranging from the obligatory Hendrix perm Eric from the late sixties to the long-haired elder statesman of his early '90s unplugged revival to modern-day shots of the aging guitarist. It all has a very cut-and-paste feel to it as you begin to notice that the film really has a minimal amount of footage to choose from when it comes to first-hand Clapton accounts.

The limited production value also begins to show when the **Yardbirds** biographer sticks around for comments on Cream and Blind Faith and the *Melody Maker* reporter offers such informative bits that could have been gleaned from just reading the liner notes. But what's most annoying is the cheap imitation of "White Room" that keeps playing the moment the film gets to Clapton's involvement with Cream. The narrator tells the viewers of such groundbreaking Cream material, but all we hear is that same, phony "White Room" rip that provides us generic cues of the era we're focusing at on-screen.

The 1960's Review drudges on and becomes a challenge to watch thanks to the limitations of the footage and its boring choice of talking heads. It plays like an A&E *Biography* episode with a smaller budget and without the commercials to help break up the monotony of its material.

Did I learn anything new by watching it? Not at all. And while it may have been short on revealing facts about the artist, it's biggest crime is presenting him in such a way that it won't stir up any interest in Eric Clapton for future reading.

Even my old man's Clapton storytelling could manage to do that.

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