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"A sinister cabal of superior writers."

Music DVD Review: America's Music Legacy: Rock 'n Roll



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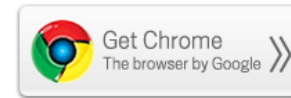
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Nostalgia for one's youth is one strong force. And nowhere is that force stronger than it is for the music that made up the soundtrack of what was probably your best years. For those of us pushing past retirement age, that soundtrack was Doo-Wop and rock 'n roll, Bill Haley and the Comets, Frankie Lyman and The Teenagers, the Penguins' "Earth Angel" and Fats Domino's "Ain't That a Shame." We were young and the world was before us, and anything was possible. Who can blame anyone for looking back at that time with joy?

Is it any wonder that *Jersey Boys* was a smash on Broadway? Is it at all strange that Doo-Wop concerts have become ubiquitous fundraisers on public television, or that oldies cruises fill up with smiling elderly rockers? Is it remarkable to watch wizened gray beards and blonde-dyed grandmas singing along again to the songs they sang and danced to fifty years ago?

That is the power of nostalgia, and nostalgia is what *America's Music Legacy: Rock 'n Roll* is selling even though if you asked them, they might say what they were really trying to sell was history. After all, this is only one of four DVDs in the *America's Music Legacy* series to be released on October 19. The other DVDs in the set cover gospel, country and western, and rhythm and blues. And the series producers may have a point. If "American music is the story of the country, a reflection of a nation alive with change," as they point out in the cover notes, rock 'n roll, like the other three genres, may well hold the mirror up to what was going on in mid-twentieth century America.

History or nostalgia aside, what is clear is that these are the songs of our youth, performed by at least some of the artists who made them. They may have aged some; they may have aged a lot, but there they are back on the stage singing and dancing, moving and grooving just like they did back at the Brooklyn Paramount in the fifties. You can close your eyes, and you can see Alan Freed in his plaid jacket. The singers are young again and so are you. As Lou Christie, with flowing blond locks and a fairly svelte figure, quips: "You thought I would be three hundred pounds and bald." And if Lesley Gore looks like she's had a little work done, well who hasn't?

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America's Music Legacy: Rock 'n Roll
Release date: 2010-10-19
Running time: 120 minutes
Publisher: QUANTUM



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Release date: 2010-10-19
Running time: 120 minutes
Publisher: QUANTUM



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