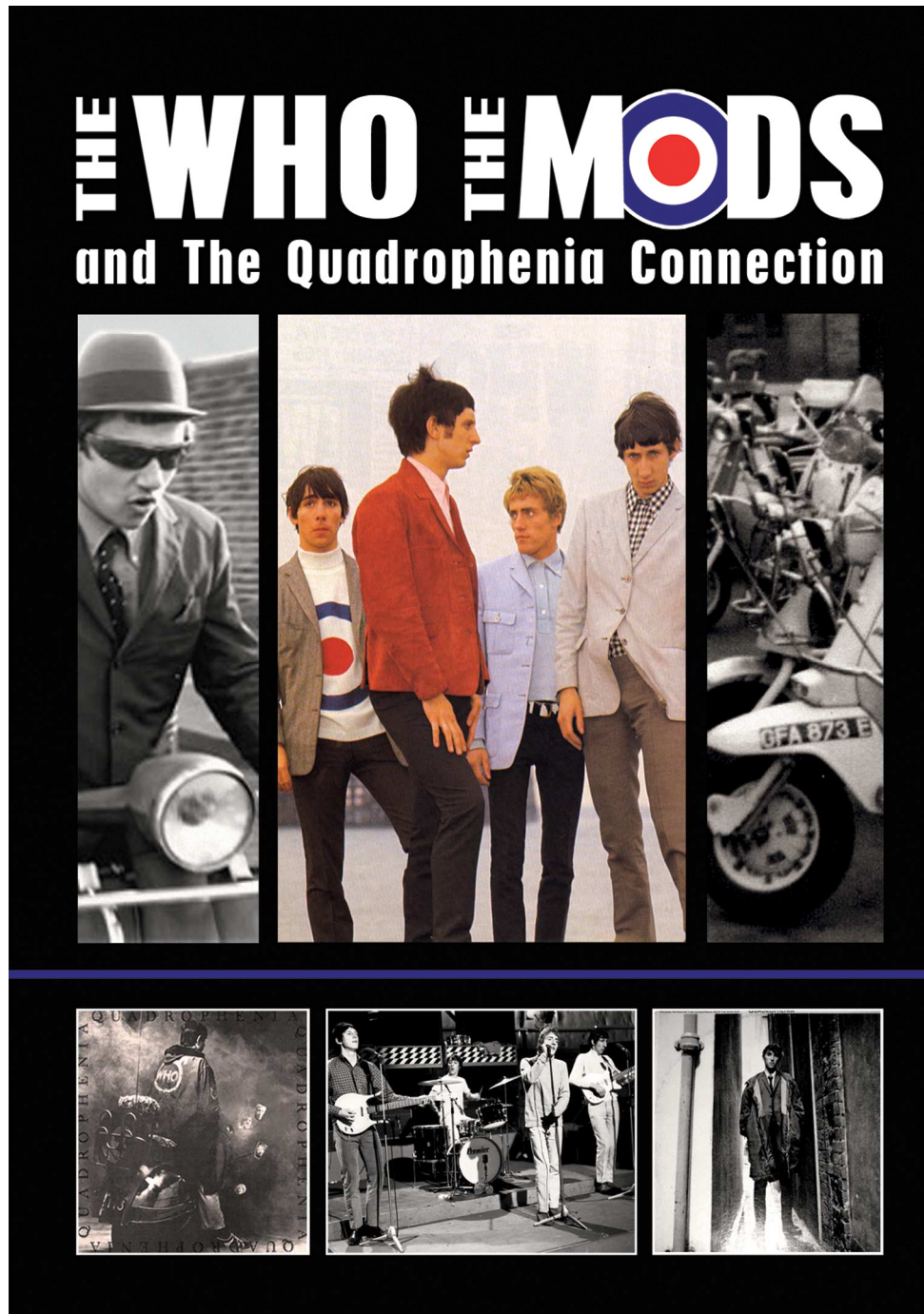


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[Music DVD Review: The Who, The Mods and The Quadrophenia Connection \(2008\)](#)



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When rhythm and blues rock skipped across the pond in the 1960s, the impact of its final splash flooded the terrain of UK music for the decade to come. Ultimately it inspired groups of young men to embrace old twelve bar blues riffs and experiment with the sound of what was traditionally dubbed "black American [soul music](#)" in bands such as The Animals, The Yardbirds, The Zombies, The Kinks, Cream, [Led Zeppelin](#), along with The Who.

Following the success of their tune "I'm the Face" and back when the quartet who would later introduce the world to rock operas were still known as the then-fashionable sounding High Numbers, their enigmatic guitarist (and father of the "windmill" strum) Pete Townshend listened to the popular Kinks single "You Got Me," and stated that he "could do that."

The result was the iconic '60s Who track that not only became a youth anthem with the title of "My Generation" but also cleverly worked in lyrics that the group knew who garner them even more press than The Kinks had received via the snarled ultimate anti-establishment message of "*I hope I die before I get old.*"

The [song](#) reigned on the charts long before "Love" would do the same for Townshend on *Quadrophenia* and its impact on their generation has caused some music critics to argue that The Who were in fact "punk before punk," a full decade before the '70s movement would later be epitomized in British '70s acts like The Clash and The Sex Pistols.

Yet whether or not you hold the same belief since the modern young men in their "Mod" apparel who influenced the Mods in both British movements don't exactly fit the visual tradition of safety-pin wearing Punks, "My Generation" became an equally sensational anthem in the states as well when The Who crossed the pond to play it at Woodstock.

From joking that their fame had gone to their heads with the album *The Who Sell Out* to the success of *Tommy*, which made the band nearly interchangeable with the name of the latter album (which was later adapted into a film), the band constantly shifted to reflect their changing priorities, personalities, along with the culture and society in which they lived.

Yet instead of riding the tidal wave of their biggest hit to date with the critical success of *Who's Next* by offering fans more of the same, they challenged listeners with a second double album rock opera in the form of 1973's daring *Quadrophenia*. Still far less extreme than *Tommy*, *Quadrophenia* was set roughly a decade in the past during the "Mod" era of men who wore fitted suits and liked fashion, spoke in American slang, dug rhythm and blues, sang with soul and zoomed around London on motor scooters.

With the title's open homage to *schizophrenia* and the term "quad" hearkening to the four very different members of the band, the group introduced listeners to a mentally unstable Mod named Jimmy Cooper whose personality seems to be split into four as each member of the group represents one aspect of his personality.

In this intriguing documentary that is especially fascinating if you're well-acquainted not just with the album in question but the subsequent UK film version as well (which is out of print in America as of this review), scholars, friends of the band, historians and others reminisce about the codependent relationship that youth and rock 'n roll had on one another.

Throughout their work and especially in albums like *Tommy* and *Quadrophenia*, "youth culture" was "used as a commodity" through the music by men like Townshend who helped articulate the anger and frustration of his "generation" whether he smashed a guitar or used lyrics to form the like-minded clique he never had growing up and always wanted via the extremely personal, retrospective epic of *Quadrophenia*.

Although the documentary features Who biographers, friends, associates, and experts on both the music and the second wave of the Mod movement that hit England again following the release of *Quadrophenia* as a film in 1978, this 2008 work which was made as a 30th anniversary tie-in of the [movie](#), does lack an overall authoritative feel you can sense even before you discover that it isn't endorsed, authorized or affiliated with the band, film, or album.

Yet, like many other great retrospective analytical [documentaries](#) about a certain pop culture phenomenon, it nonetheless hits more than just The Who's "High Numbers" by lacing the work with vintage footage and musical performances as they evaluate what led the band to the creation of *Quadrophenia*.

While it's hard to overlook the lack of polish in the presentation or the fact that repeatedly Townshend's last name is spelled incorrectly, it's still an intriguing study for Who fans. As such, the interviewees eventually reveal the four songs that can be considered signature works that tie in with all four members as aspects of the troubled protagonist Jimmy Cooper's race against the establishment including "Helpless Dancer" for Roger Daltrey, "Bell Boy" for drummer [Keith Moon](#), John Entwistle's "Doctor Jimmy," and the powerful "Love Reign O'er Me" for the album's visionary songwriter, Pete Townshend.

Released on all-region (or Region 0) DVD to ensure it can play in every country, it's the type of documentary you'll want to be sure to view with either the album and/or the film nearby so you can refer back since inevitably the the influence of rhythm and blues that rocks between "the sea and sand" will "reign 'oer" long after it finishes.