

Song Of The South: Duane Allman And The Rise Of The Allman Brothers Band

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Sexy Intellectual SIDVD 576

A tale of soul, lacking substance



The brief, but turbulent story of Duane Allman is certainly one of modern rock's more fascinating tales. Yet making a 131-minute documentary without access to the musicians he played with is an uphill struggle. Journalists, biographers and roadies (oh, and a couple of Muscle Shoals sessioners) do their best to plug the gaps, but the frantic flickering of still photos in the first 10 minutes suggests it will be an unequal battle.

That said, you'd happily watch this on BBC Four on a Friday night with a few beers for company. The most interesting side of this was the Allmans' defiance of the colour bar that ruled America in the early 60s, hanging out with black musicians and playing their blues as well as paying their dues. The Rolling Stones hardly had that hurdle to overcome in Twickenham and Richmond.

Talking of black-and-white, by the time you get treated to lengthy monochrome footage of Miles Davis and John Coltrane, by whom Duane may

have been influenced, with whom he definitely didn't play, you realise there's been no more than a smidgen of the Allmans. Worth watching once but, in truth, this is mostly bread and precious little meat. *Michael Heatley*

The Beatles: All You Need Is Love

★★

BoulevardEntertainment BVED 0098

The greatest story ever half-told

Didn't director Tony Palmer make an over-reaching, grimly memorable series about the history of popular music called *All You Need Is Love*? Well, yes, he did: and what you have here is nothing more nor less than episode 14 of the series in question, originally entitled *Mighty Good: The Beatles* when first transmitted in 1977.

Unsurprisingly, it's an odd fish when taken in isolation: you're constantly aware that the story of The Beatles is being treated as a constituent part of a far wider agenda, particularly during a lengthy mid-film digression awash with Byrds, Beach Boys, Animals and Monterey footage, buoyed by interviews with Roger McGuinn, Mike Love and Carl Wilson. And Donovan. And Bill Graham.

It's all absorbing stuff, of course, but headline Fabs fanciers might feel short-changed, particularly in view of the fact that Palmer's idiosyncratic précis of the band's career misses out so very much. It's just an episode,

remember, and it ends without even a mention of *Abbey Road* and *Let It Be*. You may wish to stick with it for the McCartney and Lennon interviews, for a glimpse of Murray The K in a disproportionate wig of Spectorian grandiloquence, and because it's the unwitting template for The Rutles' mockumentary *All You Need Is Cash*. *Oregano Rathbone*

Ministry

Enjoy The Quiet: Live At Wacken 2012

★★★

UDR Music 0235 DVD (2-DVD)

Industrial irritants' final live farewell

Ministry frontman Al Jourgensen has made it very clear lately that, at 55, he's too old and jaded to be bothered with Ministry after 20-plus years. When his friend, Ministry guitarist Mike Scaccia, died earlier this year, it was apparently the final straw. So here's the band's final DVD, released to accompany their final album, and also Jourgensen's autobiography. *Live At Wacken 2012* is a pretty impressive way to bow out, as it was Scaccia's last major show and Ministry's last stop on their most recent tour.

Jourgensen may well be jaded, but there's no sign of him or his bandmembers being burned-out: the production at Germany's huge Wacken festival was a multimedia extravaganza, and the group were heavily promoting last year's *Relapse* album, as opposed to falling back on the 90s classics that made their name (spoiler: their biggest hit, *Stigmata*, is conspicuously absent).

After all these years, it's easy to forget that Ministry were a pretty accomplished thrash-metal band when they chose to be, much as Jourgensen has always despised the mainstream thrash movement. Allied with the industrial anthems that made the band's name, all this Ministry music in a single dose is a fairly ear-bleeding experience. A bonus disc of a 75-minute set recorded at the same event in 2006 is inferior in quality, but will satisfy the die-hards. The only thing that's missing is backstage interview time with Jourgensen and Scaccia, largely because the former has always been so entertaining with his stories of drug overdoses and what-not. *Joel McIver*

Dusty Springfield

Live At The Royal Albert Hall

★★

Salvo SALVOSVX 018 (DVD+CD)

The wilderness years, by royal appointment

Guest of honour Princess Margaret is shown to her seat, the National Anthem is played, and the backing singers give us a quick burst of Elton John's *The Bitch Is Back*. It's certainly a bizarre opening to a gig, open to misinterpretation by anyone not paying full attention; this was the glossy but awkward showbiz world of Dusty back in 1979.

Almost a decade since she last saw the Top 40, and three years before an attempted rehabilitation with an album including songs by Elvis Costello and Sting, Dusty's place in the pop firmament was strictly cabaret: rushed medleys of former glories played by an inflexible band and tossed-off covers of other people's hits (Natalie Cole's *This Will Be*).

It all seems a bit down-at-heel and desperate until, every now and then, the voice works its magic. She's soaring yet vulnerable on *I Close My Eyes And Count To Ten*, emotive and commanding on *All I See Is You*, but, ultimately, high points are scant. A towering talent in a tawdry setting. *Terry Staunton*

Frank Zappa's 200 Motels

★★★★

BoulevardEntertainment BVED0113

Expressing Frank views

Filed on 1971's state-of-the-art 2" analogue videotape, and edited "live" by director Tony Palmer, *200 Motels* still resembles nothing else in any firmament, including Zappa's own canon. It's accrued a reputation as a troubled, undisciplined folly, but a coherent internal logic is there for the taking. Zappa lays it out via his avuncular "master of ceremonies", Theodore Bikel: "Touring can make you crazy. That is precisely what *200 Motels* is all about." Furthermore, "Within the conceptual framework of this filmic event... it is entirely possible for several subjective realities to coexist."

In one interpretation it's a paranoid fantasia of comedic but sinister megalomania, in which the inescapably watchful eye and vigilant ear of puppet-master Zappa file away the mutinous grievances of his band members (including erstwhile Turtles Howard Kaylan

and Mark Volman) – grievances which are then written into the script for the band to read from. Disgruntled bassist Jeff Simmons, who took genuine umbrage and fled on the eve of production, becomes the centerpiece in absentia of the astounding Dental Hygiene Dilemma animated sequence.

In another interpretation, it's like the invention of *The Residents*: or *Magical Mystery Tour* and *The Banana Splits* plus groupies, Sprechstimme, Keith Moon, dismayed orchestral musicians and an admirably corrosive cynicism. What's not to cherish? *Oregano Rathbone*

Blowing Fuses Left And Right: The Legendary Detroit Rock Interviews

★★★

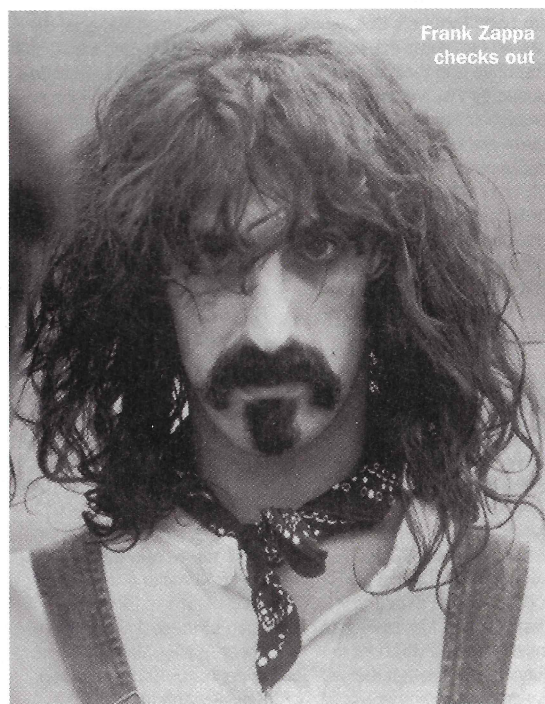
O-Rama MVD 5119 D

Picking at the Detroitus

You've got to give it up for Gil Margulis. As a 19-year-old student in 1988, when his peers would have been uniformly convinced that Guns N' Roses represented the last word in insurrectionary renegade-rock, Margulis was sufficiently switched-on as to head straight for the source. Armed with a video camera, Margulis embarked on a pilgrimage to interview Stooges guitarist Ron Asheton, MC5 vocalist Rob Tyner and the latter's bandmate, drummer Dennis Thompson.

Blowing Fuses Left And Right accordingly compiles the resulting raw footage – three unadorned hours of it – with a handful of purely expedient edits resembling Godardian jump cuts. Ron Asheton, drinking Coors and chain-smoking throughout, seems sublimely unconcerned about maintaining the Stooges legend but eagerly recounts their wayward beginnings, even taking Margulis to visit their original band house, and manager Ron Richardson's old gaff, where The Stooges played their first public performance. "We took the roof off," he says.

Rob Tyner, by contrast, is fully aware of his group's intimidating legend. In his last-known interview, the erudite, intelligent singer spits quotable epigrams by the score, emphasising the "gladiatorial" aspect of Detroit's Grande Ballroom and sagely distancing himself from MC5's adopted political stance by noting that "rock'n'roll is the expression of the human spirit unfettered by politics". *Oregano Rathbone*



Frank Zappa checks out

Photo (Frank Zappa): Bruce Linton