



Song of the South: Duane Allman & the Rise of the Allman Brothers Band

I've watched and reviewed a couple dozen rock-docs from such distributors as MVD Visual, Chrome Dreams and Sexy Intellectual. The biographies of musicians and band histories almost always have been made without the active participation and authorization of the artists, themselves, while the "Under Review" titles are limited, as well, by the restrictions imposed by copyright laws and licensing fees. Finding two hours' worth of worthwhile material to fill a DVD—mostly from music videos, news clips and public-domain sources—isn't easy. It's the testimony of associates, critics, producers, historians and friends that makes one disc better than another. "**Song of the South: Duane Allman & the Rise of the Allman Brothers Band**" is among those few documentaries that stand alone at the top of my list of favorites. Apart from being a bona-fide Rock God, Duane Allman was one of the most widely recorded and available musicians of the 1960-70s. His blues roots are easily identifiable and it isn't difficult to find people who worked alongside him or reviewed his records as they were released. His impact on contemporary musicians, especially those from the South, is inarguable. Sadly, for his many admirers, Allman would ride his motorcycle to an early grave. As difficult as it might have been at the time, the band that carried his surname and that of his brother, Greg, someone managed to recoup and retain its fan base. Their stories are interesting, as well. "Song of the South" follows Allman's journey from his early days a garage and party band in Florida, through the launch of more sophisticated ensembles, and collaborative sessions at Muscle Shoals and with Derek & The Dominos. The rise of the Allman Brothers Band from virtual obscurity to superstardom also is fully chronicled. Among the contributors are engineers and producers, the Albert Brothers; Muscle Shoals Rhythm Section founding members, David Hood and Jimmy Johnson; former co-members of Duane and Greg's late 1960s group, the Hour Glass, Paul Hornsby & Pete Carr; Allman Brothers road manager Willie Perkins; biographers, Randy Poe and Scott Freeman; band archivist E.J. Devokaitis; and Rolling Stone critics.

- Gary Dretzka

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