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REVIEW

DVD Review: Tony Palmer's Early Masterpiece - *All My Loving*

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All My Loving is the 1968 BBC documentary directed by Tony Palmer that combines the music and news of the day in a sometimes nostalgic, sometimes disturbing manner. Tony Palmer is one of the leading music documentary directors, whose past efforts include *CREAM Farewell Concert* (1968), *200 Motels – Frank Zappa* (1971) and *Ginger Baker in Africa* (1971).

All My Loving was created when John Lennon and Paul McCartney challenged Palmer, then a classical music documentarian, to make a film that encompassed the 1968 music world in one hour of screen time. The film includes clips and interviews with the likes of The Beatles, Jimi Hendrix, The Who, Pink Floyd -who had just lost Syd Barrett - Cream, Donovan, Frank Zappa, and Eric Burdon.

The film explores music with the idea that everyone demands heroes, and these heroes were going to change the world through the power of their music. This was the time of student demonstrations against the war in Viet Nam. The music describes this movement with a bitterness too deep for words alone. The music becomes an escape from the troubles of the day.

This is an important film, but not one to be watched with young children in the room, nor for the faint of heart. Tony Palmer's innovation in making this film is that he intertwines the music of the time, the aftermath of the Summer of Love, and the beginning of the peace movement with the violence that is going on in the world.

When you see the scene of the Viet Cong guerrilla on the streets of Saigon and then the gun comes up to his head and is fired, while in the background Pink Floyd is playing "Set the Controls to the Heart of the Sun," and you watch blood spewing from the open wound, it is not something that you will soon forget!

The movie continues in this vein with savage newsreel clips of Buddhist monks burning to death tied into rock music which is tied to the musicians talking about their world compared to the violence of these events. At times it flows smoothly, and at times it is choppy, but it is always on the edge.

Also included on the DVD is an interview with Tony Palmer by Jon Kurkman conducted in January, 2007. Here he describes meeting John Lennon as a student in 1963, and subsequently how Lennon helped him in meeting some of the other artists included in the film. There is also a film strip of Ralph Steadman cartoons set to the music of Cream's "Born Under a Bad Sign".

All My Loving is not a film for everyone; certainly not for the very young and not for those who can't take the raw violence. It is for those who want to get a feel for the era; for the moment and for what made the change from the Summer of Love to the violence that shook 1968 all the way to the Chicago Democratic National Convention.

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