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Couch Potato: Video and DVD

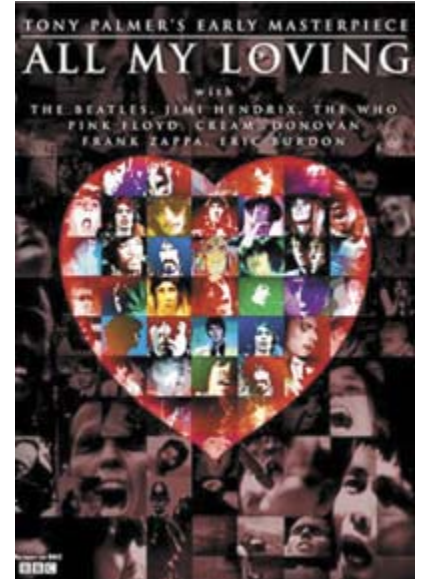
ALL MY LOVING (MVD VISUAL)

By Steven Rosen

1968, Not Rated

When British filmmaker Tony Palmer made this documentary about the Rock revolution for BBC in 1968, Marshall McLuhan's "the medium is the message" theory was -- like the groundbreaking British Rock of the time -- in the air everywhere. So Palmer shock-edits and intercuts his 52-minute film with all sorts of nonlinear McLuhanesque (and Godardian) techniques -- violence in Vietnam, concentration camp victims, sound effects and urgent-seeming interview snippets. Watching the film now, one feels the heat of Palmer's approach but wonders about the message. Is he saying Rock of the late 1960s was part of the problem or part of the answer? In a new interview that's part of the DVD extras, he makes clear he meant the latter. Yet I'm not sure the documentary shows it. But the concert footage -- filmed amazingly close and personal with great sound -- of Cream, The Who, Jimi Hendrix, early Pink Floyd and Eric Burdon is terrific. And Paul McCartney and Frank Zappa are exceptionally lucid in interviews about their music. One wishes Palmer would go find all his unused footage and put together a concert film. The music, unlike his approach to showing it, is timeless. (Steven Rosen) **Grade: B**

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