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July 30, 2007

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The controversial doc includes rare performances and interviews with Jimi Hendrix, Cream, Frank Zappa, Pink Floyd and the Who.

DVD REVIEWS

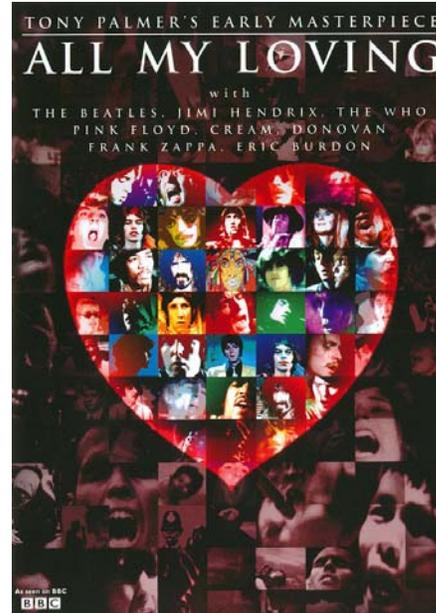
DVD Review – ALL MY LOVING

7/22/2007

Posted by [Collider](#)

Reviewed by James Napoli

Back in the early 1960's, Tony Palmer, then still at Cambridge University, was asked to cover the press conference for *A Hard Day's Night* in London. Finding the whole affair rather silly, he declined to ask any questions. This refusal to bend to Beatlemania did not go unnoticed by [John Lennon](#), who cornered Palmer, told him he admired his cheekiness, and gave him his home number, suggesting he phone when he finished school. Years later, when the BBC asked Palmer to direct a filmed inquiry into what, exactly, the Vietnam-era pop bands were on about, Lennon's number came in quite handy. In fact, John wanted Tony's film to give exposure to many acts that were not being featured on British TV at the time, and who were on the vanguard of new rock. Hence, *All My Loving*, the controversial doc that lay shelved at the Beeb for months, includes rare performances and interviews with Jimi Hendrix, Cream, [Frank Zappa](#), Pink Floyd and the Who, among others.



All of the above can be gleaned from watching the low-tech but highly informative and enjoyable interview with Tony Palmer. It's the only bonus material on this bare bones DVD (the thorough interview even makes up for the lack of a booklet, something this kind of rock history-based project seems bereft without). In many ways, hearing Palmer talk about the creation of his film, and his connection to the idea of rock as the classical music of its day can be more intellectually engaging than the film itself.

Not that it lacks real points of interest. Zappa's recounting of his decision to let a group of Marines share the stage with him is particularly indicative of the hippie zeitgeist, as is Donovan's unshakable belief in his generation as a kind of Utopia, wherein every creative discipline is given full flower. Pete Townshend and Paul McCartney wax philosophic about the impact of their music, and a live performance by Cream (one of the set pieces of the

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work) is thrilling in its rawness. Jimi Hendrix proves that his guitar spoke more eloquently than he did about his art, and Eric Burdon gives a passionate diatribe about rock going back to its rhythm & blues roots after burning out on LSD.

These ideas are often interspersed with stock footage of everything from Christian revival meetings to Nazi death camps, as well as the then-ubiquitous images of the horrors of the Vietnam War. Even taking into account the influence of the avant-garde film scene of the time, it is hard to view these kind of juxtapositions in the present day without them seeming like the products of a more naive, reactive time. And we can feel the strain of the film's attempts to explain to parents what's really going on with these freaky longhairs. That being said, one of the more fascinating interviews features Eddie Rogers, an ex-Tin Pan Alley publisher, who represents the "old days" of the music industry, when a man's word was his bond and people had talent. His rigid viewpoints seem to guide us toward the opposing notion that the times they are a-changin', and no matter what anyone else thinks, maybe "those crazy kids" actually have something to say.

However, one cannot take in this message without also reflecting on another notion: that every single generation believes the one after it is full of crap. (Another highlight here is Anthony Burgess, of *Clockwork Orange* fame, being very dismissive of young people.) And don't all songwriters process their interior lives through music? Why, then, is the particular group of cultural touchstones featured here so much more vital, more reflective of its time than any other?

Comparisons to lasting social relevance notwithstanding (we are a divided world at war, again...still), there is, in the end, a disconnect that occurs in revisiting *All My Loving*. While this is a must-see for any devotee of psychedelic rock, over the proceedings is an air of importance: one that seems to imply that the depth and complexity of what these young, drug-addled musicians were doing (deep and complex as it could certainly be) somehow utterly transcended ego-based hero worship and went straight to a higher plane. No doubt the hedonistic artists also believed in something finer, as all idealistic young people must. Yet, combined with the bonus interview, this conceit contributes to the uneasy feeling: that we are once again being informed about the 1960's being the most important era that has ever occurred in modern history. The electronic media also came of age in that time period and, as such, most of the popular musical figures of the day were hardly ever out of range of a camera. Though it is, perhaps, an unintended side effect of watching *All My Loving*, we may actually pause to reflect that there were aspects of the 60's that nudge it toward being the most self-important era in recent memory, too.

ALL MY LOVING

Voiceprint Media

52 minutes

Bonus Material: Interview with Filmmaker Tony Palmer

James Napoli contributes the column "I've Been Thinking" to Collider

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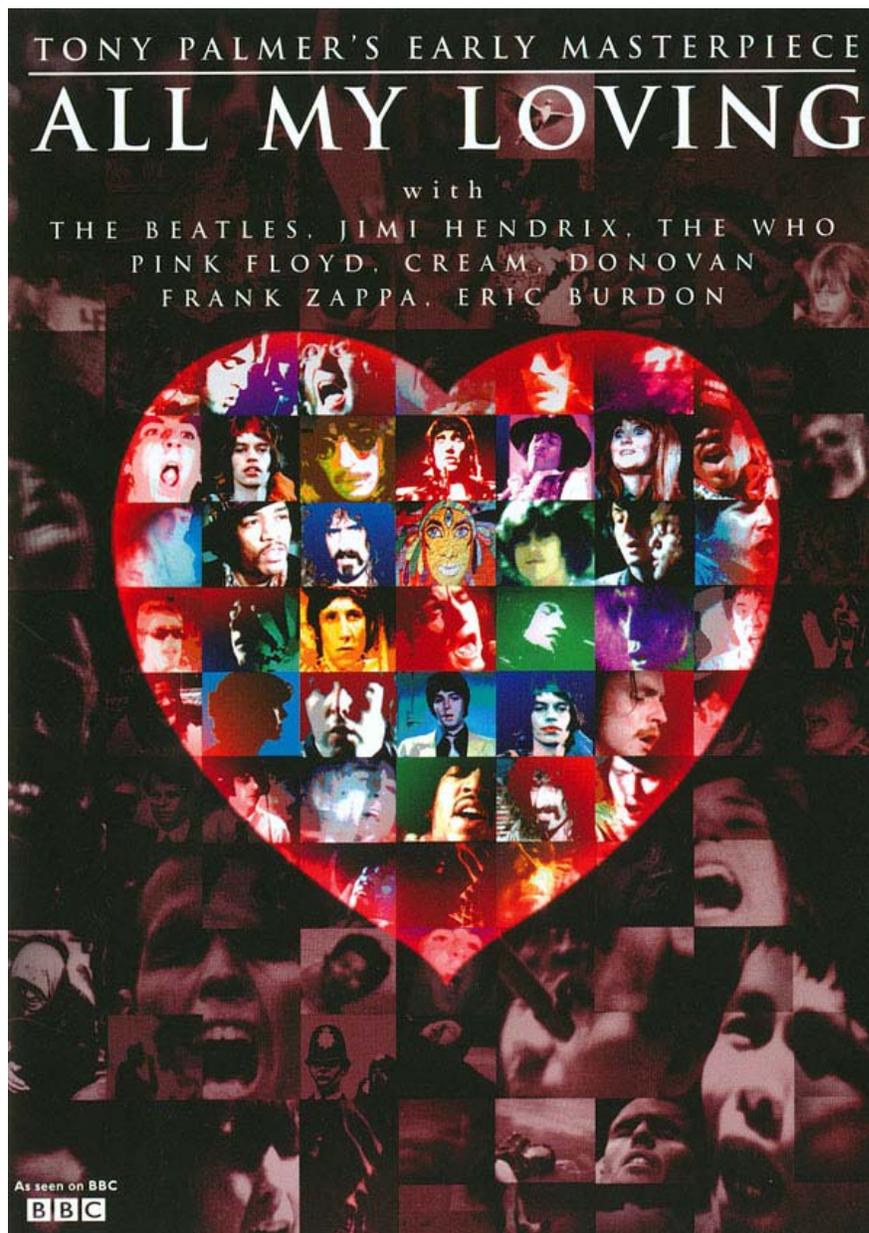
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