

CLEVELAND PLAIN DEALER

DVDs: In 'All You Need Is Love,' Tony Palmer goes on a magical tour of music

by [Chris Ball/Plain Dealer Reporter](#)

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TONY PALMER'S CLASSIC SERIES
THE STORY OF POPULAR MUSIC



"All You Need is Love" is an exciting five-DVD set from the 1970s that tells the history of popular music. A gold mine of rare footage, revealing anecdotes and exciting music making, it covers ragtime, jazz, blues and gospel, moves to vaudeville and music hall, Broadway, swing, R&B, country and folk, and finishes with rock. It shows their origins and how each music tradition influenced the next.

Also new this week on DVD are the recent acclaimed ABC TV film of "A Raisin in the Sun" starring Phylicia Rashad; the complete third season of "Saturday Night Live," featuring Steve Martin singing "King Tut"; and "Indiana Jones: The Adventure Collection," a new three-DVD set of the 1980s movies, with 12 new bonus featurettes.

All You Need Is Love

Tony Palmer

MVD Visual

In 1974, John Lennon suggested an ambitious project to a filmmaker friend: telling the story of popular music.

"All You Need Is Love," landing Tuesday on DVD, is director Tony Palmer's hearty response to his Beatle buddy. The TV series ran for 17 enthralling episodes in 1976. The interviews, performances and old clips Palmer gathered make up nearly 15 hours on five discs.

"Love" is a gold mine of rare footage, revealing anecdotes and exciting music making. Reviewers called it "scholarly," "stunning," "superb" and "stimulating."

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For five months, Palmer traveled the globe, interviewing hundreds of music legends and touring landmarks. Some sites he captured on film are now gone forever, from the Cavern in Liverpool to Sam Phillips' Memphis studio.

Palmer somehow found concert film of Charlie Parker and Billie Holiday. He chatted with Irving Berlin at 88, ragtime pianist Eubie Blake at 89 and Irving Caesar, who wrote "Tea for Two," at 80.

David Bowie admits he chose rock because he couldn't play jazz. Eric Clapton regrets playing the same set list for three "dishonest" years with Cream. Phil Spector mumbles about feeling lonely in his mansion.

Paul McCartney recalls his father working a spotlight in an English music hall. Bo Diddley bitterly tells how black performers were used up and discarded. Jerry Lee Lewis says he did what he wanted "as long as I felt it was right."

Creem magazine editor Lester Bangs rips Roxy Music's Bryan Ferry. Pat Boone takes credit for opening the door for black artists whose songs he ripped off.

Palmer says his biggest regret was missing out on punk rock, which was starting as production was wrapping up. It's forgivable. With this amazing time capsule, he has created a musical monument for the ages.