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The Big Picture Patrick Goldstein on the collision of entertainment, media and pop culture

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The '60s: Not just a decade but a way of life

09:00 AM PT, Jul 4 2008

If the 1960s didn't exist, Martin Lewis would've had to invent them. The maestro behind the 9th annual Mods & Rockers Film Festival in Los Angeles, a two-week event that concludes next week, Lewis is steeped in all things '60s. A protege of Beatles publicist Derek Taylor, Lewis has worked with Paul McCartney on various post-Beatles projects, produced the DVD edition of "A Hard Day's Night" and launched "The Secret Policeman's Ball" benefit series for Amnesty International, which brought together '60s British comic talent (including alumni from Monty Python and Beyond the Fringe) with such rock icons as Eric Clapton, Jeff Beck, Pete Townshend, Phil Collins and Sting.



Martin Lewis

Lewis is part impresario, part huckster, part one-man comedy act. When I tracked him down earlier this week, he was in Las Vegas, lounging in a penthouse suite at the Mirage Hotel with '60s icons Donovan and Patti Boyd, waiting to do emcee duty at a Beatles fest there. It was 110 degrees in the shade in Vegas that afternoon, so I asked Lewis what he was wearing. His answer tells you all you need to know about his impresario-huckster-comic persona.

"Being very British and always going against the grain, especially amongst all these Americans in shorts and sandals, I'm wearing a black Armani pin-stripe suit with my best Winklepickers," he explained, Winklepickers being a Cockney term for the stylish sharp-pointed boots that were the shoe of choice among Teddy Boys in the 1950s and were often worn by John Lennon and other '60s British musicians. Lewis insisted that sweltering in Armani was preferable to the comfort of squishy shorts and sandals. "Englishmen don't remove their jackets," he explained, "unless they're in the presence of their personal physician or their mother."


This year's Mods & Rockers Festival is largely a celebration of another fascinating '60s British icon, Tony Palmer. His little seen 17-hour TV series, "All You Need Is Love," is perhaps the most ambitious celebration ever of American popular music. (Read more from our [Randy Lewis](#) about Palmer's role in that series. Go [here](#) for a full schedule of events.) But I was interested in hearing Lewis talk about something even more strange, obscure and wonderful, a film that screens Monday night that celebrates one of America's landmark achievements, yet has gone virtually unseen here since its 1979 release.



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About the Blog

Patrick Goldstein has been Times' Calendar section contributing writer to the

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He also has been a contributor to publications such as Rolling Stone, Playboy, Vogue, the Chicago Tribune and the New York Times Sunday Magazine

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