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## ALL YOU NEED IS LOVE

Way back in the Pleistocene Age, 1967, **Leonard Bernstein** hosted a special on CBS, **Inside Pop: The Rock Revolution**, in which the maestro attempted to make rock 'n' roll palatable to an audience of uptight parents and concerned citizens. I can easily recall the almost scholarly tone of Bernstein's presentation, and informed interviews with **Brian Wilson**, members of **Herman's Hermits**, the **Hollies**, **Janis Ian** and **Tim Buckley**. Instead of concluding that rock music was significant only in its ability to get high school dropouts and other unemployable youth laid and paid, Bernstein found it often required a surprising amount of intellect, innovation and talent to pull off.

I wish I had caught **Tony Palmer's** occasional series **All You Need Is Love**, which aired a decade later and ran 16 times longer than the CBS special. While the title suggests **All You Need Is Love** is primarily a history of rock 'n' roll, with ancillary discussions of how other genres impacted on it, the opposite was true. It took the documentarian and his cadre of producers and historians all of 17 hours to trace the history of popular music in all its disparate incarnations, from the advent of the slave trade to the era of glam-rock and Muzak. Their journey took them from Africa to New Orleans and Europe; from the Mississippi Delta and Memphis to Chicago and Detroit; from Music Hall to Broadway, Tin Pan Alley, Hollywood and Las Vegas; from the gentle hills of England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales, to the hollers and ridgelines of Appalachia and the Ozarks, to Nashville's Grand Ol'Opry and the beerhalls of Austin; from the male impersonators and drag queens of London's West End, to **Alice Cooper**, **David Bowie** and **Kiss**. One genre informed the other, constantly evolving into something new and different. Dozens of noteworthy musicians, young and old, were interviewed and/or captured in performance, as were historians, journalists, producers, music publishers and club owners. Palmer opens several of the episodes by asking artists to offer their opinions on where and how their music originated and what differentiated it from other genres. From there, the conversations went in a dozen different directions, from the scholarly to the abstract. **John Hammond** is especially eloquent in his recollections of how racism, greed, poverty and substance abuse impacted negatively on the artists without whom there would be no music industry. To this end, **Muddy Waters** describes matter-of-factly how he and other bluesmen were ripped off by their managers and record labels. In another stirring segment, **B.B. King's** "The Thrill Is Gone" is juxtaposed against **Martin Luther King's** *I Have a Dream* speech; Liberace entertains septuagenarians with a terrific boogie-woogie, 16 to the bar, and helps Palmer trace the roots of his own persona back to British Music Hall and vaudeville; **Charles Aznavour** recalls **Edith Piaf**, and **Jerry Leiber** and **Mike Stoller** re-create the uneasy birth of Hound Dog; **Pat Boone** blithely explains how he allowed himself to become the Great White Hope of white radio programmers in the '50s. No genre is left unexamined, from burlesque and minstrel, to hillbilly and reggae, and on to synthesizer and Muzak. Sadly, far too many of the people we meet and places we visit in **All You Need Is Love** are long gone and some of their stories will go untold. Palmer's cameras were able to capture Memphis' Beale Street, before it was cleaned up for tourists and conventioners, and Chicago's famous Maxwell Street flea market before it would be swallowed up by commercial development. Because **All You Need Is Love** was completed just as punk and hip-hop were about to explode in England and America, more than a quarter-century of pop history and musical evolution - rave, rap, light jazz, world, grunge -- is, by necessity, missing in the DVD package. It would be interesting to see how the same producers might have filled that very large blank today, even knowing that new opportunities would present themselves as soon as they entered the editing room. -- *Gary Dretzka*