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## All You Need Is Love

**Cast:** The Beatles, Elvis Presley, Jerry Lee Lewis, Ray Charles, Fela Kuti, Tina Turner, Hoagy Carmichael, Edith Piaf, Stevie Wonder, Minnie Pearl  
US release date: 13 May 2008 (Voiceprint)  
UK release date: 8 May 2008

by **Zeth Lundy**

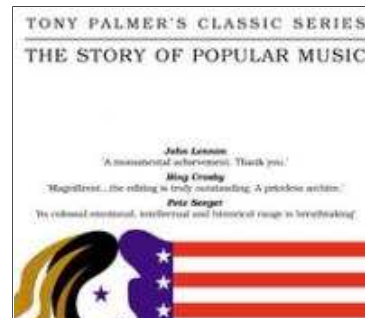
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At first glance, the wealth of footage in Tony Palmer's *All You Need Is Love*, a 17-part, 15-hour documentary on the history of popular music originally broadcast in the 1970s, seems to make an independent argument for the series' overall merit. In the first two episodes alone, Palmer's cameras yield visceral live footage of Jerry Lee Lewis, punching his piano and threatening the lens; Ray Charles, unleashing an electric piano solo of unusual ecstasy and control; Buddy Rich, demonstrating the proper way to fly off the handle on a drum kit; and Fela Kuti and his band, conjuring a tempest of human emotion with the simple perpetuation of a hard-hitting vamp—not to mention the amount of archival footage of artists like Charlie Parker, Woody Guthrie, and Billie Holiday, thought to be non-existent at the time but familiar now, and insightful interviews with the likes of Amiri Baraka, Jerry Wexler, and John Hammond about the "compromise" of pop music and "political question" of white America's exploitation of black musical forms. Wowza.

*All You Need Is Love* was an incredibly audacious undertaking when it was originally produced in the 1970s, and although its style, tone, and contentions can appear dated to a contemporary audience, it remains an impressive achievement even today. Palmer's scope is so far-reaching that rock 'n' roll doesn't even make an appearance until the 13th episode, following evaluations of ragtime, jazz, blues, vaudeville, Tin Pan Alley, musicals, and R&B, among others. (The Beatles, however, do receive an entire episode dedicated to them.) The very resurrection of the series is cause for celebration in the pop community, as it has never been commercially released or re-broadcast since it originally aired, three decades ago, and even now remains in some back-corner depot of public obscurity.

For many, the onslaught of live performances, from Liberace and Pat Boone to the Rolling Stones and Stevie Wonder (who performs a solo take of "You Are the Sunshine of My Life"), and interviews with an inelegantly wasted Phil Spector (on "River Deep, Mountain High": "That record sounds like God hit the world and the world hit back"), righteous Lester Bangs ("The



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