

'All You Need ...' available for first time

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While I have never brought a DVD to your attention in this column before, this one was impossible to ignore.

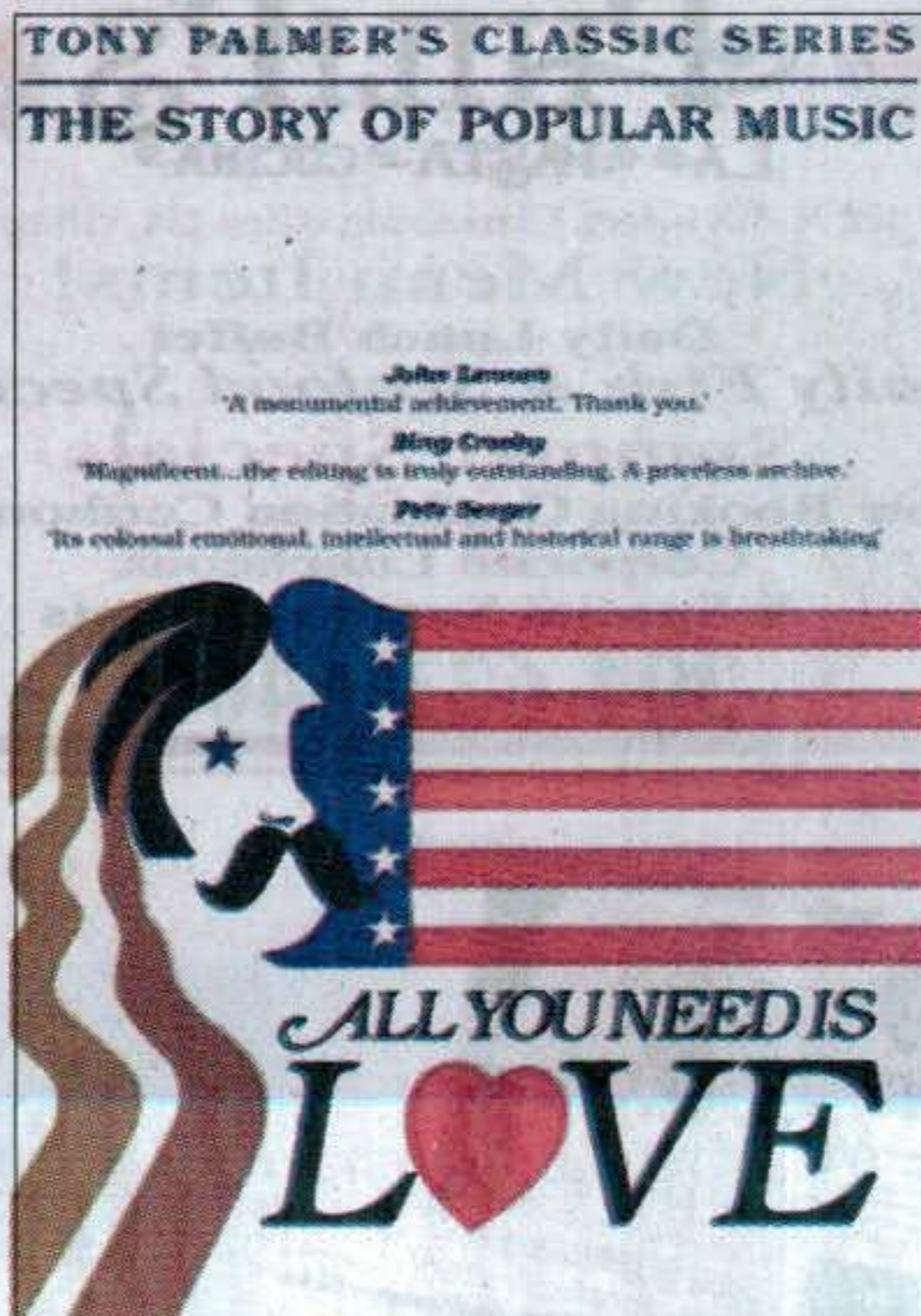
"All You Need is Love" is a massive documentary series from the 1970s that chronicles the "story of popular music." This DVD set engulfs everything that I love about music: its diversity, its character, its relationships and, most of all, the intermingling of various musical styles, an intermingling that birthed new genres and new approaches to writing and recording for decades.

These documentaries are about an explosion of creativity that we are likely never to see again (for the record, I missed most of it the first time).

As the story goes, in the 1970s acclaimed journalist and filmmaker Tony Palmer, at the suggestion of John Lennon (hence the series title) set out to tell the story of where music came from and where it was then, inadvertently chronicling its future in pieces as well.

The result was a 17-episode documentary that brought a wide variety of genres to intrigued audiences. Palmer covered ragtime, blues, jazz, vaudeville, folk, swing, country & western, musicals and, of course, rock 'n' roll.

No matter what style of music you love, there is at least one episode here that you will connect with. "All You Need Is Love" aired to critical acclaim between 1976 and 1981, and has not been available commer-



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cially since, so don't count on it staying around long this time.

There isn't really a good place to start when talking about this series because each episode is a period in time that stands alone in many respects. I found it interesting that only two episodes are dedicated to a specific artist, which seems to make the collection better-rounded as many artists from each genre are included in each episode.

The two sole-artist episodes are "I Can Hypnotize Dis Nation," a documentary on the tragic life of ragtime hero Scott Joplin, and "Mighty Good," which features, of

course, The Beatles, an undeniable force in the history of popular music. Another noteworthy episode is the Las Vegas-oriented "Rude Songs" featuring the vaudeville and music hall genres, because it includes footage of the beloved Judy Garland.

Also the episodes entitled "Making Moonshine" (country music) and "Always Chasin' Rainbows" (Tin Pan Alley) grab the viewer with some of music's most legendary names including Al Jolson, Perry Como and George Gershwin in the latter and Ernest Tubb, Roy Acuff, Roy Rogers and Minnie Pearl in the former.

Obviously fans of The Beatles won't want to miss the "Mighty Good" episode, either. As we know, Beatles fans are rabid and this is footage not seen in decades!

"All You Need Is Love" is the epitome of the phrase "something for everyone" and will hold the interest of both young and old with its stories of vaudeville, the birth of ragtime, The Beatles movement and the origins of country music. Many documentaries since this one have covered the fascinating times of the 1960s and '70s, but this series boldly stands out for its inclusion of a time that is quickly being lost.

Vaudeville, ragtime and Tin Pan Alley are important parts of music history that formed the foundations for popular music. Without Tin Pan Alley, there is no "American Idol." It's great to see these long-forgotten artists receive some credit once again.

"All You Need Is Love" is available everywhere now via Music Video Distributors. For more information, you can check out www.musicvideodistributors.com