

# LABOR OF LOVE

EPIC POP-MUSIC DOCUMENTARY NOW ON DVD

When journalist/filmmaker Tony Palmer was working for the BBC in the mid-'60s, his friend John Lennon offered a suggestion. "His continuous complaint to me was that there were great musicians who simply couldn't get on television," says Palmer. "And that I had a responsibility to get them on television."

In 1968, Palmer delivered *All My Loving*, a groundbreaking documentary about rock icons such as the Who, Cream and Jimi Hendrix. But Lennon wasn't done with his suggestions. Why not a doc on the entire history of popular music?

"I thought it was impossible," says Palmer of

try as well as rock 'n' roll. *All You Need Is Love* includes interviews with nearly every major player from the music world, including Bing Crosby, Elvis Presley, Phil Spector, Muddy Waters, Tina Turner, Paul McCartney and Lennon. The series, broadcast around the world between 1976 and 1981, is now commercially available for the first time as a five-DVD boxed set from MVD Visual. Why the 27-year wait?

"They're called distributors," says Palmer. "They're brainless. They just sat on it."

Regardless, Palmer is as proud today of the collection as he was in '76. He only has one regret:

The financiers wouldn't give him the money to continue so he could include punk rock.

"[The series] changed the atmosphere in which popular music was considered," says Palmer. "It paved the way for people like Ken Burns to start making far more detailed histories of a particular aspect of music. TV companies at that point backed off from anything on this scale because they

thought that popular music wasn't worthy of this treatment. This phenomenon called popular music, which is in all of our lives 24 hours a day, deserves to be treated as a proper source of historical study. This is about people who've given us something the last 100 or so years that is essential to our lives."

—John Elsasser



The Beatles

the project. "[Lennon] said, 'You know what you should call it, right? *All You Need Is Love*, because that's what it's about.' So now I have a title like no other and have Mr. Lennon, who no doubt would find me and complain if I didn't get on with it."

Based on Lennon's prompting, Palmer directed a 17-part, 15-hour documentary that encompassed ragtime, blues, jazz, folk, swing and coun-

## SCREEN TEST (DAFT PUNK)

Those wondering where Daft Punk's creative juices went during the period between 2001's *Discovery* and 2005's *Human After All* might find the answer in *Electroma*, the French duo's entry into the burgeoning cinematic niche of robotic quests for humanity. The mostly silent film features none of the band's music (or words) but all of the pretension the aforementioned plot description implies. Then what, if

anything, makes *Electroma* worth trudging through its 70 minutes of mind-numbing tracking shots, which test the limits of even the most patient cinephile? The absurdity of two robots in rhinestone leather Daft Punk jackets, for starters. One innovative shot comes when the robots (played by actors, not the members of Daft Punk) undergo plastic surgery in their desperate pursuit to become human. As the two patients are sterilized, they become enmeshed in a whitewashed background projecting a visually magnificent, Rorschach-like image. Its serene beauty passes quickly, however, leaving you to bask in neo-realistic walking shots that linger far beyond intentional pauses in action. More daunting than moving, the dour *Electroma* lacks the levity required for its midnight-movie aspirations. [Vice, [www.vicerecords.com](http://www.vicerecords.com)]

—Matt Siblo



# NOTES

FROM THE UNDERGROUND



Magnetic Morning (l-r): Adam Franklin, Sam Fogarino

Sometimes it's the little things that get bands off ground. In the case of *Magnetic Morning*, it was an offhanded comment in a magazine article that brought Swervedriver frontman Adam Franklin and Interpol drummer Sam Fogarino together, with a little assistance from a veteran rock critic to grease the wheels.

Franklin had read an article that quoted Fogarino about his love of Swervedriver. When he needed a fill-in drummer for his band Toshack Highway, Franklin asked *The Takeover* editor/publisher Jack Rabid to put him in touch with the Interpol skinsman.

"But I wasn't interested in just being a drummer in another band," says Fogarino. "I had a bunch of music I wanted to work on. We met up a few times and hung out just to get to know each other. We thought, 'Let's do something outside the usual role.'"

Soon enough, the duo was working, mostly via email on Fogarino's self-described "fairly formed sketch" drawn from songs he'd built up over the years. The result can be found on the group's self-titled EP, which was released digitally last November and on CD in April by Merge Records. The songs are a testament to Franklin and Fogarino's willingness to step away from their individual musical calling cards; there's no screeching distortion or three-guitar jams *a la* Swervedriver, and the music is considerably looser than Interpol's buttoned-up rock.

"We both have an interest in certain film-soundtrack styles," says Franklin. "So there's some slightly more exotic instrumentation creeping in from that direction."

*Magnetic Morning* plans to record a full-length in August and play live in October, following Swervedriver's reunion tour and a summer run by Interpol.

As chronicled in issue #77, the Mendoza Line called quits last year after the divorce of the Brooklyn band's principal singers/songwriters, Timothy Bracy and Shannon McArdle. In July, the Bar/None label is issuing McArdle's solo debut, *Summer Of The Whore*. McArdle, who recorded with Mendoza Line drummer Adam D. Carlin, says her 10 post-breakup songs constitutes "a miserable record, as you can imagine." Bracy played with some former ML members as Timothy Bracy's Collection Agency in late 2007 but is now at work on a new project he can't discuss in detail. "I'm not dead yet," says Bracy, adding, "I'm really excited for Shannon, who I think is one of the greatest songwriters and singers."