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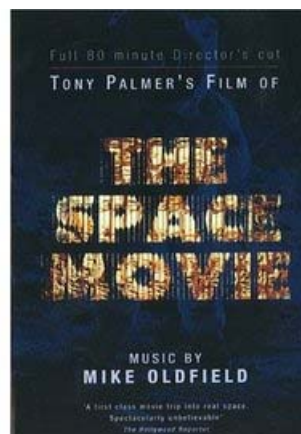
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Tony Palmer's Space Movie (MVD/Voiceprint) + Magnificent Desolation – Walking On The Moon (IMAX/HBO) + Robert Garofalo's Apollo 11 + 13 (MVD Visual)



Picture: C+/B-/C/C+

Sound: C+/B-/C+/C+

Extras: C

Film: B+/C+/B/B

The idea of going to outer space still fascinates many people, but there are all different kinds of approaches to looking at the subject. Four recent DVD releases take three very different looks at the subject and we will look at each of them.

Robert Garofalo's Apollo 11 + 13 are separate releases issued at the same time that exhaustively edit together as much archival footage as possible on their respective missions and turn out to be more substantial and watchable than you might expect. Many such collages have been on the weak side over the years as cash-in projects, but these are decent. They can be rough going at times for the conditions of the materials, but are solid records that are education-worthy and archival in themselves.

Mark Cowen's IMAX/Tom Hanks-produced **Magnificent Desolation – Walking On The Moon** is the most scientific and most expensive of the productions, and not just because it uses IMAX, digital and production costs are up, but its greatest flaw is that it is only 40 minutes and not the best-looking IMAX production on space travel we have seen. Still, it justifies itself by having just enough to offer the audience, though it could have had more. Too bad there was not a bonus IMAX presentation or DTS sound, because the DVD certainly had the room.

Finally, the best release is from Tony Palmer, whose Beatles documentary **All My Loving** (reviewed elsewhere on this site) is one of the best on the subject and his **Space Movie** (1979) is one of the most exciting looks at

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early space flight you will ever see, with exciting editing, footage, pacing, use of music and constant build up that starts of very well and just gets better and better. No less than Mike Oldfield supplies the original music and is the best of the four discs.

Fans will want all four, but if you must choose one, **Space Movie** is the ticket.

All the DVDs are anamorphically enhanced 1.78 X 1 except the 1.33 X 1 on the **Apollo** discs. Ironically, **11** looks the worse and the softest, while the Ron Howard film itself was later reissued in IMAX. All use stock footage that is on the aged side and needs some work, so it is no surprise that despite the most video work, **Desolation** is the best-looking of the four, though not always. It also has the best sound with a Dolby Digital 5.1 mix, despite the **Apollo** discs featuring DTS 5.1 mixes, they are just pumping up any audio they have, which is better than Dolby Digital 2.0 or the like. It is Dolby 2.0 that **Space Movie** has, complete with the best use of music and editing of sound and picture.

Each has some extras, with **Desolation** offering an interactive way to access archives on space flights. The **Apollo** discs have interview featurettes and Space Movie has a half-hour making of featurette and it is the best of the lot, is anamorphic 1.78 and has some picture issues of its own, but is good.

- Nicholas Sheffo



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