

**EVERYTHING I HAVE  
IS YOURS**

EILEEN SIMPSON AND BEN WHITE  
(OPEN MUSIC ARCHIVE)

This text responds to *Everything I Have Is Yours* (2019) by Eileen Simpson and Ben White (Open Music Archive), an artists' film that takes as a starting point records produced during the first decade of the UK pop charts – 1952 to 1962 – and experimentally repurposes them in an on-going exploration of the limits of sampling and the possibilities of live collaboration.

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EVERYTHING WE HAVE GOES ROUND

Steven Bode is Director of Film and Video Umbrella, and has been with the organisation for almost thirty years. In that time, FVU has commissioned and produced almost 200 artists' projects, in partnership with venues across the UK, as well as internationally. The latest of these is *Everything I Have Is Yours* by Open Music Archive — a co-commission with Contemporary Art Society, University of Salford Art Collection and Castlefield Gallery.

Nipper isn't a nipper any longer. And His Master's Voice doesn't boom out with the volume and authority it once had. Things go in circles, and in cycles. The world turns; a record spins — and then there is silence, or a stuck and repeating groove.

Nipper was (for those who don't already know him) the trademark face of His Master's Voice, in its day one of the most famous record labels in the world. He sits, head cocked, beside the loudspeaker of an old-fashioned phonograph; his rapt expression perhaps a demonstration of a well-known canine facility for upper-wavelength audiophile discernment, or, more likely, as early record manufacturers would have liked the public to believe, lovably unable to distinguish the real-world sounds of his master from the astounding fidelity of their reproduction. This iconic image — the faithful dog as guardian of the faithful copy — appeared as a marque of quality on numerous early record labels (Berliner Gramophone, Bluebird, Victor; all of them no longer with us) and still lives on in the corporate identity of home entertainment retailer HMV, another once-ubiquitous national institution whose heyday has also almost certainly come and gone.

Snippets of historic record label graphics (including those of His Master's Voice) reoccur at periodic intervals in *Everything I Have Is Yours*, a new film by Eileen Simpson and Ben White (who have worked together since 2005 under the name of Open Music Archive). The greater part of the film's thirty-minute

duration, however, consists of footage of various musicians playing together over different loops of sounds sampled from popular recordings from the first decade of the pop charts, 1952-62. If the sounds share a particular vintage, so do the musicians: they are almost all in their 70s and 80s, and consequently would have been teenagers when the songs they are culled from were in vogue. As a side note, the musicians are also all from Greater Manchester, continuing the Manchester-born Simpson and White's occasional roll-call of creative collaborations with figures from the city's music scene, while also extending their wider researches into disparate musical subcultures and their individual histories.

The ten years from 1952 to 1962 are a source of fascination for Simpson and White for a number of reasons. A time of relative innocence where now-familiar concepts of the 'teenager' or the 'music business' hadn't fully coalesced, the period was marked by a eclectic spectrum of musical styles, all shifting in and out of focus like fragments in a kaleidoscope, until a dominant consensus about what 'pop music' could be and should be began to cohere, ratcheted up by the phenomenon of the Beatles, post-1962.

That year is pivotal in other ways, too. Changes in UK copyright law that came into force in 2013 tightened the grip on ownership of material produced from 1962 onwards, without correspondingly relaxing conditions for preceding years. This new division between 'before' and 'after' indirectly created a *de facto* hierarchy of lesser and greater

importance; with the earlier era as a kind of opening support act to the main event. Consigning pre-1962 music further to the margins also deflected attention from how increasing swathes of it existed in an often-misunderstood grey area: either unknowingly copyright-expired, or, equally overlooked by the public, readily on hand for people to access and share. With the music industry in a dogfight first with Napster and later Spotify over the unlicensed downloading and increasingly prevalent streaming of digitised music, this growing windfall of freely (and legally) available material was less widely noted than it might have been.

It is this grey area that Open Music Archive projects have been so interested to explore, and exploit. And it is from this muddy ground of invisible riches that Simpson and White dredge and beachcomb the sonic loops that form the ambient backdrop for *Everything I Have Is Yours*, extracting jewel-like moments from tracks like *Because You're Mine* (by Nat King Cole), *Take My Heart* (by Al Martino) and *Return to Sender* (by Elvis Presley), as well as the much-covered ballad that lends the film its name. Songs that have an enduring and unmistakable auditory signature, their titles also serve to remind us that a surprising proportion of this back catalogue is not only part of a common heritage, but something easily accessible and potentially sharable by all.

Let off their copyright leash, these pet sounds commingle. Let loose on this new-found material, the musicians gravitate towards each other, and play. As the camera performs a series of orbits of

the performance/recording space that act almost as a metaphor for the principle of free circulation, what is apparent is that both music and musicians are enjoying a new lease of life.

Victor, Bluebird and His Master's Voice are all long gone now, but one label that still persists is that of the 'older musician'. Classical music, jazz and folk, as well as the venerable traditions of the ballad and *chanson*, all set great store by the virtues of age and experience to enhance and extend the repertoire. Pop, on the other hand, for much of its history, has privileged youth. But now pop has its own weight of history — sixty-seven years and counting since the birth of the charts, and with many of its hall-of-famers now well over pensionable age — this accent on youth (and a constant demand for the new) increasingly co-exists with other vintages and timelines. Yet whereas an elder jazz musician, for example, can still be restless and 'questing', pop audiences seem to prefer their stars to mellow over time, to be fixed in the moment they burst onto the scene, rehashing 'golden oldies' on the retro circuit, unable to escape their past.

One of the pleasures of *Everything I Have Is Yours* is how echoes of the past are atmospherically present but never predominate. The different sonic loops that Simpson and White have constructed, for all their evocation of the feel and *timbre* of a particular era, are not designed to take the musicians back but rather to move them forward, by encouraging them to improvise and experiment, and interact with new technology, which they evidently do with relish. People say you can't teach

an old dog new tricks, but *Everything I Have Is Yours* offers plentiful evidence to the contrary. Not that this should be in the least unexpected. Part of the joy of making music is that you continue to be open to other people's input, receptive to new sources of inspiration. That spirit of creativity does not die away. It is timeless, and it is ageless. Birthdates are wholly incidental.



# EVERYTHING I HAVE IS YOURS

A Film by  
**Eileen Simpson & Ben White**  
(Open Music Archive)

—

**Chas Baker** – vocals  
**Norman Beaker** – guitar  
**Max Beesley** – drums  
**Roger Browne** – piano  
**Stewart Butler** – baritone sax  
**Tony Chess** – drums and djembe  
**Maureen Donahue** – vocals  
**Mike Farmer** – tenor sax  
**Peter Fox** – guitar and vocals  
**Bo Lee** – bass guitar  
**Jill MacDonald** – vocals  
**Jean Martin** – vocals  
**Paul Medina** – double bass and trombone  
**Bruce Mitchell** – drums  
**Richard Piggott** – guitar  
**Roy Rigby** – guitar

## **Commissioners /**

### **Executive Producers**

Film and Video Umbrella  
University of Salford Art Collection  
Castlefield Gallery

### **Producer**

Laura Shacham

### **Assistant Producer**

Polly Wright

### **Casting Producer**

Claire Bleasdale

### **Additional Casting**

Open Music Archive  
Laura Shacham  
Polly Wright

### **Director of Photography**

Jamie Kennerley

### **1st Assistant Camera**

#### **/ Focus Puller**

Sean Beasley

### **2nd Assistant Camera**

Josh Hagherty

### **Additional Cinematography**

Jonas Mortensen

### **Grip**

Rick Griffiths  
Jon Head

### **Gaffer**

Mark Rickitts  
Dan Tunstall

**Lighting Technician**

Simeon Ogden · The Stoller Hall

**Sound Engineer**

Lee Aston

Brendan Williams

**Stylist**

Ianthe Wright

**On-set stylist**

Lily Austin

Lou Hall

**Hair & Make-Up**

Katy Brody

**Production Assistants**

Adam Douglas

Hannah Jupe

Daniel Newport

Joseph Preston

**Sound Mix**

Lee Aston

Brendan Williams

Low Four Studios

**Additional VFX**

Matt Wilmshurst

**Colourist**

Max Ferguson-Hook ·

Time Based Arts

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NoDrama

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Dan Parrott and Brendan Williams · Low Four Studio

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