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REVIEW

'Tom Dowd & the Language of Music'

By Roger Moore | Sentinel Staff Writer

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Tom Dowd saw it all, heard it all, and captured the greatest of the great on disc and tape. **Tom Dowd & the Language of Music** is a terrific documentary that puts a much-deserved spotlight on this unknown craftsman, a hands-on eyewitness to music history.

From Coltrane to Clapton, Aretha to the Allmans, Dowd was a whiz-kid engineer who became one of music's great producers and recording engineers. He was the guy who ran the mixing board, sitting in rapture when Bird played sax, coaxing Aretha, hanging with Booker T. and the MGs and introducing Duane Allman to Eric Clapton and crafting "Layla" out of their talent and his ear.

Clapton speaks. Allman and Dickey Betts give testimony. Jerry Wexler, no slouch in the studio himself, passes along kudos. And Dowd narrates his fascinating life story that began with the Manhattan Project and climaxed in the glory years of Classic Rock, the 1970s.

Mark Moormann's film doesn't find a single soul with a bad thing to say about Dowd, who haunted studios in Manhattan, Memphis, Muscle Shoals and Miami. That makes this film a marvelous tribute to a musical giant who died in October. Tom Dowd is gone, but his legend lives on, digitally preserved.

Screening at: 9:30 p.m. Tuesday and 7 p.m. March 16 at Park 2.