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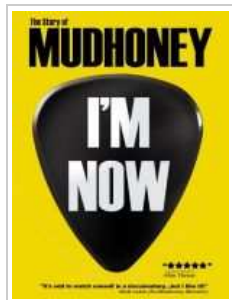


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by John Patrick Gatta



I'm Now: The Story of Mudhoney

King of Hearts Productions

Rarely have I watched a band biography and find that as the closing credits scroll by I'm calculating whether I'm missing anything in that artist's catalog. That's the effect "I'm Now," the career retrospective celebrating influential Seattle rock pioneers Mudhoney, had on me. Since the members aren't pleased to be labeled as the Fathers of Grunge, let's just say their affection for the guitar effects pedals Univox Super-Fuzz and the Electro-Harmonix Big Muff definitely provided a dirty rock blueprint for the band and many others that followed. (Mudhoney even honored the effects by naming its debut EP, "Superfuzz Bigmuff.")

Like its songs, the film moves through the group's 25 years – pre-Mudhoney days in Green River to the creation of its signature sound, indie success, major label headaches and most recent world tour – with a lean, no filler approach and consistent energy. Besides interviews from past and present members, there's also input from Pearl Jam's Stone Gossard and Jeff Ament, Thurston Moore, Kim Gordon, Soundgarden's Kim Thayil and Sub Pop Record's Jonathan Poneman.

"I'm Now" doesn't go into "Behind the Music" drama yet it still covers any pitfalls – Arm's substance abuse, Lukin leaving the band, record company woes. The only subject not directly addressed is the band's reaction to superstardom eluding them. While wonderfully sarcastic at the trappings of the music industry, that aspect of Mudhoney's existence doesn't seem as important to them as the fact that there's enough interest and enough songs for the members to carry on.

What's taken from the 102-minute film is that Mark Arm, Steve Turner and Dan Peters seemed destined to be together. The two guitarists and drummer had the good fortune of falling into a similar musical mentality and group dynamic that fit well with original bassist Matt Lukin and its current one, Guy Maddison. We find the members mocking anything in life or the music world yet doing so under a strict blue collar ethic. With that comes the realization, as Arm works as Warehouse Manager at Sub Pop and Maddison is a nurse tech at a hospital, that it's better to view making music as an outlet done for fun rather than as a job. And that attitude can be so infectious.

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