

The Seattle Times

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I'm Now: The Story of Mudhoney”(not rated): No Seattle band was so directly tied to the wave of grunge as Mudhoney, and this new documentary traces the band's 23-year history. Mudhoney is extensively interviewed, as are other local musicians. Those interviews are interspersed with live concert footage, including the 1988 “Lamefest” appearance with Nirvana.

In their earliest bands, Mudhoney's Mark Arm and Steve Turner played with future members of Pearl Jam, who give their observations, as well. Producer Jack Endino correctly calls the guitar riff that starts “Touch Me, I'm Sick,” the band's first single, “the opening salvo of grunge,” and it certainly launched Sub Pop Records.

Eventually the band left Sub Pop, though in the greatest irony of the band's story, Mudhoney lead singer Arm now runs the label's mailroom, and the film starts with him shipping out mail-order albums. It is humbling, but the band still tours, and their show at Bumbershoot was packed, proof that people still care.

The best explanation of why Mudhoney is an everyman's band comes from Soundgarden's Kim Thayil: “They are the people who would be watching them.” Those people will love “I'm Now.”



- Charles Cross