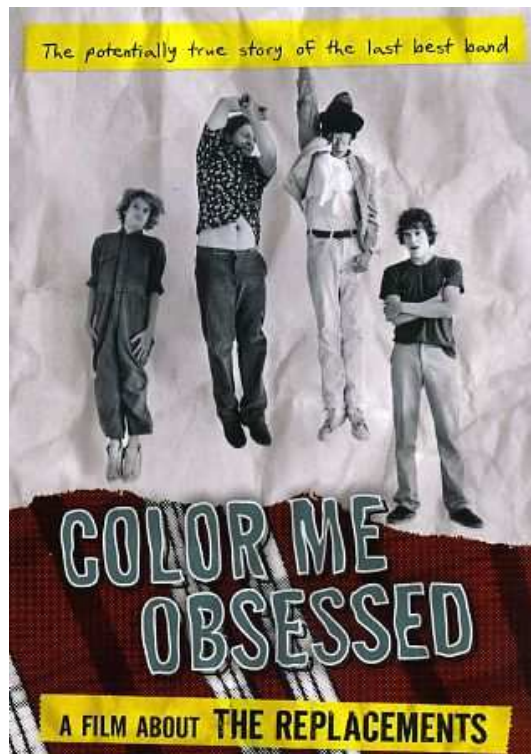


FAME Review: The Replacements - Color Me Obsessed: A Film About The Replacements (DVD)

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Color Me Obsessed: A Film About The Replacements

[The Replacements](#)

[MVD Visual](#) - MMD5533D (DVD)

Available from [MVD Entertainment Group](#).

A review written for the Folk & Acoustic Music Exchange
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How do you miss a group this damn good...especially if you're a critic? Well, it happens, even for someone like me who's issued thousands of critiques and been published in quite a few print mags and on-line sites for 25 years. Somehow, you just can't cover everydamnthign even when it comes to groups that have endured for quite some time. For whatever reason, I always kinda guessed The Replacements were in a league with half-assers like Crass, which of course prompted me not a whit to transport my rear from couch to CD shop to stereo. Just goes to show how wrong you can be, and rock docs like *Color Me Obsessed* prove their intrinsic value not only in memorializing oeuvres worthy of it but also in pointing new ears in the right direction...and, Jesus Christ, was this foursome one helluva outfit! Without one scrap of the band's music anywhere in it (licensing expenses, I'm guessing), I nonetheless watched both discs all the way through, wrapped in several hours of engrossing narrative, and then dialed up YouTube immediately thereafter, to catch some album cuts, mesmerized in both instances. Thus, only one question remained: "How the fuck did I miss this group in its day?!?!?" But I did.

Ironically, I've long dug Chris Mars' music (and wotta painter that guy is) and have been getting ever more into Paul Westerberg's work as time goes by but—Jesus, this is embarrassing!—never knew they issued from The Replacements. About 20 minutes into the first disc of this set, the overwhelming love all the interviewees had for the ensemble was compelling, went way beyond cult worship, and the straight-line non-stop barrage of clips made the outsized sense of true endearment all the more palpable and affective. Everyone fucking loved these guys...but there was a back story, and it wasn't terribly pretty. If tension contributes to rock and roll greatness, well then everything's explained, 'cause these bastards topped the legendary Townshend/Daltrey and Tyler/Perry feuds, Bob Stinson the center of the cyclone, a very conflicted, anomied, act-up kinda guy, someone, it appears, never at peace with his residence in this world (and who can blame him?).

Everyone interviewed—save for Robot Christgau, bafflingly the dial-up, go-to, Establishment crit of choice as he ages, even though he, Dave Marsh, and the near-entire old guard sold out decades ago—is glaringly a misfit, including the Goo Goo Dolls, George Wendt, Grant Hart (Husker Du), and etc. But, without exception, they all found an almost religious experience in The Replacements' music, the phrase "changed my life" popping up quite a few times. Nonetheless, one element rings out clear as a bell: Stinson & Co. were out of control from the moment they got together, and not a day passed that moderation wasn't defenestrated. Wild Willie Blake informs us that the road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom, but, had he and his eccentric wife been pogo-ing at CBGB's, I think he woulda changed that last part to "the palace of rock and roll integrity", and the paradox is quite clear.

An example of the fanaticism engendered by the lads can be found in an instance cited but not quite fully explicated in the documentary: manager Peter Jesperson, to overcome the Twin-Tone label owners' reticence to release *Stink*, The Replacements' '81 LP, volunteered to hand-stamp 10,000 LP covers to save costs - 10,000! - and it proved to be the deal breaker as *Stink* pushed the band past the fanzine stage, leading to '83's *Hootenanny* cementing their legitimacy. From there, though, nothing but the studio sound could be looked upon as assured as the young upstarts went through alcohol like two-legged distilleries, and the course of an evening's concert fare could vary wildly from drop-dead inspirational to who-the-fuck-are-these-flaming-gob-assholes???

This MVD documentary matches the tone of the Sexy Intellectual DVDs, and I sat enthralled for hours even though the entire affair, from start to finish, was plebian as all get out...and maybe that's the key. The Replacements were truly a band of the people, four seemingly average jokers who came out of an anonymous metropolis (Minneapolis) but who loved rock and roll, hated the plasticene ambiance of what America had become, and were determined to at least make a long inebriated party of life until the curtain came down, which it did, with wreckage and good times strewn all over the landscape. Their music was soma for a lot of bands and listeners, and...goddammit, now I'm hooked too! Just because of a documentary. Heh! Funny how things happen. Ah well, better a Johnny Comelately than a Bertram Neverheardem. Thanx, MVD, I'm in your debt. And in the spirit of things, I plan on breaking open that vintage bottle of grandpa's Ol' Brainstun Bourbon I've been saving for a special occasion. Here's to The Replacements. Bottoms up...and drink deeply!

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