

B Color Me Obsessed: A Film About The Replacements

By Noel Murray December 5, 2012

Gorman Bechard's documentary *Color Me Obsessed: A Film About The Replacements* attempts something unusual, and not necessarily recommended. The film tells the story of one of the greatest rock 'n' roll bands of all time without using any music, archival footage, interviews with the band members, or photos of the band or its records (until the closing credits). Instead, Bechard turns the conspicuous absence of The Replacements into an aesthetic choice, letting fans, critics, and associates tell *their* version of how this quartet of fuck-ups shambled out of Minneapolis, drank their way across the country, recorded some of the best albums of the '80s, and left behind a legacy that still provokes fruitful conversations about what it means to be rock 'n' roll.

The downside to this approach is that there are moments in *Color Me Obsessed* that beg for illustration. When people talk about the opening guitar riff of "I Will Dare," or how crappy the cover art for *Tim* is, or the crazy outfits that guitarist Bob Stinson wore onstage, the lack of corroborating images or sounds is hard to overlook. It doesn't help that Bechard isn't exactly ruthless with his cuts, either. *Color Me Obsessed* runs over two hours, and that includes the opening montage of "um"s in response to the "Why The Replacements?" question, and the nearly 15 tedious minutes of "What did The Replacements mean to you?" Q&A that ends the film. At times this documentary feels like someone hit "play all" on the "bonus footage" section of a DVD.

But there's nothing wrong with Bechard's lineup of interviewees, which is formidable. He has celebrity Replacement fans like George Wendt, Tom Arnold, and Dave Foley; he has journalists and critics like David Carr and Robert Christgau; he has next-generation rockers like Craig Finn and Colin Meloy; and he has plenty of eyewitnesses from the '80s Minneapolis punk scene, including the staff at Twin/Tone Records and Grant Hart of Hüsker Dü. They all talk about how, at a time when rock 'n' roll was divided between remote, lumbering chart-toppers and humorless DIY ideologues, The Replacements were legitimately inspiring, for their wastrel-next-door look and smartass sense of humor.

But what's most fascinating about *Color Me Obsessed*—and the real justification for the film's structure—is how often all of these avowed Replacements-lovers disagree about what made the band great. Did frontman Paul Westerberg squander his own talent with his drunken pranks, or was the band at its best when its members were barely coherent? Were the major-label albums worthless, or just an extension of The Replacements' career-long career between rock classicism and punk chaos? *Color Me Obsessed* doesn't come to a definitive conclusion on any of these questions; it's enough that Bechard gives each point of view an airing, allowing a picture of the true Replacements to be formed in the spaces between the differing sides.

Key features: Two separate commentary tracks (one from Bechard, one from producer Jan Radder); a lengthy behind-the-scenes featurette; another hour of edited-together anecdotes; and a second disc containing full-length interviews with Christgau, Carr, and Hart.

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Anonymous Bosch

What a stupid, pretentious idea. And how are George Wendt, Tom Arnold, and Dave Foley any kind of selling point?

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ElDan

Q: So, George, what did The Replacements mean to you?
A: I think one of my sons had one of their tapes. I accidentally stepped on the case one night and it hurt my foot really bad.

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Bob Dylan Thomas Dolby Digital

Then he turned up the stereo really loud and blasted me out of the house.

53 MINUTES AGO 1 LIKE



Warren Oates

Believe it or not, this may be the turning point for my hatred of Tom Arnold. He's gone from being sort of this unlikable guy to someone who doesn't seem too bad, and who can blame him for grabbing any sort of fame he could get?

Plus, oddly enough, he's pretty decent in some dramas. Go figure a world where Tom Arnold comes off as more likeable than Mel Gibson.

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Core Concept

NORM!!!

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doctorhawkes

This reminds me of a terrible doco I saw on the Doors recently. One of the experts interviewed for his opinion was "Record Store Owner".

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Ghis Diffbrook

Love Her Madly is the only Doors song you will not like...

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greatest hits albums are for housewives and little girls

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