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- DVD And Blu-ray Reviews N-S (714)
- DVD And Blu-ray Reviews T-Z (363)
- Links Worth Checking (1)
- Live Music (41)
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Color Me Obsessed: A Film About The Replacements

by Mark Tolch

Published on 06-16-2013 09:46 AM

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Released By: [MVD Visual](#)

Released On: 11/20/2012

Director: Gorman Bechard

Cast: Grant Hart, Robert Christgau, Jim DeRogatis, Tom Arnold, Brian Fallon

Year: 2012

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The Film:

I have to admit that I'm a bit of a slacker when it comes to being a music fan. While I like a number of different bands that fit in a number of different genres, ranging from the obscure to the mainstream, I tend to miss the boat when it comes

to some obvious choices that would probably be right up my alley. So when I received a copy of *Color Me Obsessed: A Film About The Replacements*, I was curious to learn about a band that a number of people have recommended to me over the years.

Who are The Replacements? As the film explains, The Replacements were formed in 1978 in Minneapolis, when singer/guitarist Paul Westerberg was invited to join Dogbreath, a band he routinely stopped to listen to jamming on his way home from work. With Westerberg taking over vocal duties, he, drummer Chris Mars, and brothers Bob and Tommy Stinson changed the name to The Impediments, and quickly made a name for themselves by performing in varying states of extreme intoxication. With a combination of good tunes and the promise of a trainwreck of a live performance, the newly named Replacements quickly gained a following in Minneapolis, eventually getting the attention of Twin Tone, a small, predominantly punk-rock label run by two record store owners.





Now with distribution, The Replacements started making a name for themselves outside of Minneapolis, and took their 3-ring circus stageshow on the road. Playing legendary punk venues like CBGBs, they were known as much for their songwriting as their drunken performances, frequently breaking out a variety of random cover songs during shows, and getting heckled when they actually played well. Despite their shenanigans in the live environment, their studio albums (now with Sire Records) were highly regarded, with many considering their "Let It Be" record to be a masterpiece.

Unfortunately, the band seemed to dog success both unintentionally and purposefully at every turn, and conflicts in the band resulted in a breakup in the early nineties, after a number of lineup changes. Westerberg, clearly the controlling voice in the band at the end, went on to a successful solo career, while others in the band were not so lucky; Bob Stinson died shortly after the breakup.

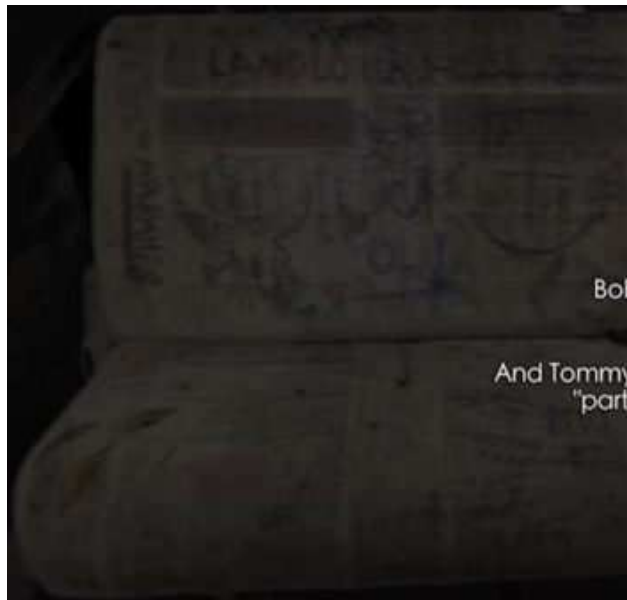


Color Me Obsessed has a huge wealth of information in it, told by the people who witnessed The Replacements throughout their career. Director Gorman Bechard has rounded up just about everyone who had anything to do with the band, including members of Husker Du, Babes in Toyland drummer Lori Barbero, Steve Albini, Village Voice critic Robert Christgau, Jack Rabid, and Kid in the Hall Dave Foley, along with random fans like George Wendt and some weirdo hipster who made imaginary friends with the band while living on his parents' farm. Just about every bit of dirt is uncovered...just about...and the interviews are primarily arranged in a way that tells the story chronologically.

While the interview footage is great, one glaring omission needs to be addressed; the complete lack of anyone from the Replacements, themselves, and the absence of any of their music. While Bechard does address this in the commentary,

rather rudely, as being intentional, a two-hour documentary consisting mainly of talking heads is not going to do it for everyone. The appearance of a few photographs doesn't quite do enough to break up the monotony by the time the film reaches the halfway point, and let's be honest, watching a guy go on for ten minutes about how he had imaginary conversations with the group while he was alone doesn't so much demonstrate the impact of the band as it does slow the pace of the film right down. Add to this the lack of music, and you basically have a magazine article.

Bechard's reasons are his own; he emphatically denies that he couldn't obtain music rights or that the band had no interest in the project; but one would think that a group he places so much importance on would be documented a little more thoroughly. One expects interviews from other party in a documentary, but to have two hours of nothing but is excessive and grating.



Video/Audio/Extras:

Presented in 1.78:1, Color Me Obsessed looks fine, being that it's made up primarily of interviews. There are no issues with the picture, and the variety of different locations are matched well with each other throughout the film. The Dolby Digital 2.0 track is adequate for this dialogue-only film, with the interviewees coming across clearly and well-balanced.

Extras consist of an extra hour and twelve minutes of deleted and extended interviews, which don't really get into any more detail than the film itself does.

There are also 2 commentaries featured. The first is with Director Gorman Bechard, who, to be completely honest, comes across as a total asshole in the first 2 minutes, slamming everyone who thinks he couldn't afford the music rights for the film. "If you can't deal with that...you would hate The Replacements". That aside, he does cover a lot of information, including the genesis of the project, and the people he worked with, as well as some technical details.

A second commentary with Producer Jan Radder is a little more pleasant, discussing the job of a supervising producer, ties with the film industry and Gorman Bechard, and the semantics behind arranging so many interviews, including the absence of Husker Du frontman Bob Mould.

A second disc of extras contains a "Behind the Scenes" which consists of an hour-long interview with Gorman Bechard, and a 10-minute interview with Co-Producer Hansi Oppenheimer. Honestly, by this point, I'd seen over three and a half hours of talking heads yapping about The Replacements, so I have no idea what they're talking about.

As if that weren't enough, the complete interviews with Grant Hart, Robert Christgau and a couple of others take up another three plus hours.

Four Trailers are also included.

The Final Word:

A lot of people seem to really like Color Me Obsessed, and you may, also. For some, though, two hours of talking heads and no band involvement is going to sound like a major misfire.



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