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COLOR ME OBSESSED

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Unauthorised, unconventional and understated documentary concerning perhaps the last truly great American rock band of the 1980's.

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I will preface this review with a single statement that doesn't in anyway, shape or form negate the quality of this film; if you're not a Replacements fan, you'll probably find Gorman Bechard's painstakingly researched documentary 'Color Me Obsessed' to be about as boring as it's possible for a film to be. If on the other hand you are a big Replacements fan as myself you'll probably be enraptured by it.

Taking the rather unusual approach of disregarding archive footage almost entirely, the 2 and a bit hour long film instead tells the story of the band through their fans, both minor celebrities (Tom Arnold and... um... 'Norm' from Cheers) and 'civilians' alike. Thanks to some incredibly skilful editing and a story which is intrinsically interesting if you're as passionate about the band as I am, the film manages to remain consistently watchable, never once dovetailing into trite, anecdotal bullshit. The Replacements recorded some of the best music of the 80's so it's genuinely bizarre that there is literally none of it represented here, but I presume this was for legal reasons more than anything else.

What's most impressive about the doc is that it does n't just focus on Paul Westerberg and only briefly mention 'the other 3' (as a lesser documentary undoubtedly would) with the Stinson brothers especially coming across as the most interesting members of the band with drunken antics detailed including the late Bob Stinson taking a shit down a laundry shoot on Saturday Night Live. Of course a documentary is only really as good as it's subject and thankfully as a perennially drunken dysfunctional band there is plenty to tell but it has to be said that the last 15 minutes drag a little and though it is interesting to hear so many different sides of a story, some of the interviews can feel a little repetitive.

The Replacements were a band with an incredible, self deprecating sense of humour and as such there are quite a few genuinely funny moments scattered throughout the various interviews here but the general vibe here is not one of humour but one of reverence. The love felt by the fans, friends and assorted industry bods (including legendary music critic Robert Christgau) is obvious, with Replacements acolytes such as The Hold Steady's Craig Finn and Gaslight Anthem's Brian Fallon marking them as perhaps the most important band of their lives and honestly given the evidence it's hard to argue.

The extras here are pretty standard but the 2nd disc contains more than an hour of extra footage which is almost as revealing as the feature itself and as the film is so extensive anywhere there is little ground left to cover by the time it comes to a close with an emotionally charged slideshow of the band's greatest achievements.

Color Me Obsessed is (above all else) the story of a band who just about held it together in spite of their own self destructive tendencies. If you're not a fan already then avoid this like the plague but for fans it's impossible not to recommend. Maybe it's the parallels between the divided music scene of the 80's and

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the divided music scene of 2012, but this wonderfully inventive and conclusive film leaves me with one thought, overriding all other; we could use another Replacements right about now...

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1546381/>

8/10

Written by: Benjamin Hiorns on 12/17/2012.

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