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REVIEW

Music DVD Review: Bob Mould - *Circle Of Friends*

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Despite being one of the most influential figures in rock over the past 25 years, Bob Mould has always been somewhat reticent about his past. After his first band, Hüsker Dü, broke up in 1988, he released *Workbook*, a solo album that traded the Hüskers revved-up punk for acoustic introspection.

When he toured with his next band, Sugar, in the early 1990s, he didn't play any Hüsker Dü songs at all, and Sugar also got left out when he put together an electric band in support of 1998's *Last Dog And Pony Show*. Playing those songs with other musicians, he felt, was too uncomfortable for him. Instead, he would save classics like "Celebrated Summer" or "If I Can't Change Your Mind" for his solo acoustic tours.

But by 2005, enough time had passed for Mould to approach his extensive catalog with a different mindset. When he toured with a new band behind his *Body Of Song* CD, he finally incorporated songs from all phases of his musical life. A DVD of his October 7, 2005 show at the 9:30 Club in his adopted hometown of Washington, DC, [Circle Of Friends](#), is now available.

Mould gets right down to business, tearing into the opening three songs from *Copper Blue*, Sugar's 1992 debut, with a force that simply can't be duplicated with just a 12-string. From there it's on to four strong cuts from *Body of Song* before turning into a celebration of his career. Only two of his post-*Zen Arcade* albums, *Last Dog And Pony Show* and 1990's underrated *Black Sheets Of Rain*, are not represented. Along the way we get favorites like "See A Little Light," "Chartered Trips," and "I Apologize."

The previous times I've seen him in concert, either solo or with Sugar, he cut an imposing figure, bellowing his songs of emotional torment with an intimidating intensity. But on *Circle Of Friends*, he's lean and relaxed (as relaxed as one can be while singing "Hoover Dam" and "Hardly Getting over It," that is), bouncing around the stage with an energy that belies his (then) 45 years, while retaining every bit of power those songs had when they were new.

It also helps that Mould's band is exceptional, providing plenty of support for Mould to spray decibels of white-hot fire from his trademark heavily distorted Stratocaster. Keyboardist Richard Morel has worked with Mould on several projects, bassist Jason Narducy provides great back-up vocals while keeping the low end solid, and drummer Brendan Canty is an iconic figure in his own right from his days in Fugazi.

The DVD comes with a pre-show interview with Mould and his band, as well as a card advertising a new Mould album, *District Line*, which will be available in February 2008, and promises plenty of what we expect out of Bob Mould. Until then, however, there is plenty on *Circle Of Friends* to keep us longtime fans happy.

Dave Lifton is a writer whose take on pop culture can be found at [Wings For Wheels](#). He also blogs about soccer at [Booked For Dissent](#).

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