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Review: Bob Mould | Circle Of Friends [DVD]

More so than any other concert film we've watched in recent memory, the new **Bob Mould** DVD "Circle Of Friends" conveys the feeling that you are actually at the show. We don't mean to say that the experience is flawless; it feels a lot like being close to the stage, but maybe off to one side. This is primarily because, curiously, "Circle Of Friends" doesn't feature a single straight-on shot of Mr. Mould while he is performing. All the tight "one shots" of the storied songwriter are shot up from the floor of the venue. It's an oddity in an otherwise very good film.

Shot at the final gig of a six-week tour in 2005 at the 9:30 Club in Mould's most recent hometown Washington, D.C., "Circle Of Friends" captures Mould reconciling with his guitar-heavy past. The show is surprisingly devoid of the dance-oriented sounds that captivated the former **Husker Du** and **Sugar** fronter in recent years, despite the fact that his DJ partner Richard Morel (a/k/a just plain old **Morel**) plays keys as part of the touring band. Rounding out the combo is ace **Fugazi** skin pounder Brendan Canty and the very able bassist and backing singer Jason Narducy, whose contributions go a long way to fill out the live sound.

Another thing we didn't expect was the pre-show interviews with each of the players, which combine into a little featurette about how Mould rounded up the members of his backing band. But the real show here is the combo's vibrant, angsty performances. It takes a few songs for Mould and Co. to really nail the groove (which is too bad, as cataclysmic opener "The Act We Act," the lead cut on *Sugar*'s electrifying debut and a :: clicky clicky :: favorite, would have shone more brightly later in the set) but once that happens — around the solo in "Paralyzed" — the performance is a series of air-tight, no-nonsense (no stage patter, either), gloriously heavy rock songs.





Highlights include the surprising guitar work on the fretboard during the solo of “Hoover Dam” and the slowed-down, subdued version of “Hardly Getting Over It.” The quiet treatment for that latter tune deftly sets up well-time dynamic explosions in the last verse. And then the song steps directly into a one-two punch of *Husker Du* classics, “Could You Be The One?” and then a soaring version of “I Apologize.”

An insert in the DVD case promotes Mould’s forthcoming set *District Line*, which will be released in January on Anti. According to the ad, the record contains “memorable melodies, heart-heavy lyrics, plenty of guitars.” It’s little surprise that that’s exactly what “Circle Of Friends” delivers as well. Mould began a tour promoting the DVD release in Chicago Tuesday night; there were apparently some problems with “DVD playback,” according to one his most recent blog posts, but we’re certain any kinks will be worked out by the time Mould hits the Paradise Lounge in Boston Nov. 5. Full promo tour dates are below. Buy “Circle Of Friends” from MVD *right here*.

Bob Mould: [Internets](#) | [MySpace](#) | [YouTube](#) | [Flickr](#)

- 10/10 — Bryant Lake Bowl — Minneapolis, Minnesota
- 10/12 — Chop Suey — Seattle, Washington
- 10/14 — Doug Fir Lounge — Portland, Oregon
- 10/16 — Herbst Theater — San Francisco, California
- 10/17 — The Roxy Theater — Hollywood, California
- 10/20 — Lincoln Theater — Washington, Washington DC
- 10/20 — 9:30 Club — Washington, Washington DC
- 11/02 — Highline Ballroom — New York, New York
- 11/05 — Paradise Lounge — Boston, Massachusetts
- 11/08 — Gravity Lounge — Charlottesville, Virginia
- 11/10 — John & Peter’s — New Hope
- 11/11 — World Cafe Live — Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- 11/17 — 9:30 Club — Washington, DC
- 12/08 — Highline Ballroom — New York, New York
- 12/15 — 9:30 Club — Washington, DC

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