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The Velvet Underground

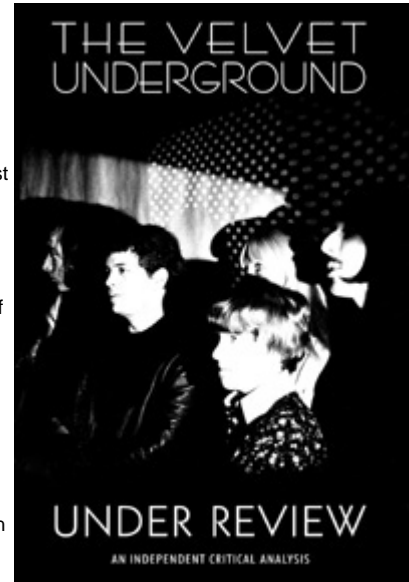
Under Review (MVD)
by **Brian Varney**

Coming to you from the always-fine folks at MVD is the first in a pair of documentaries, apparently two entries in the same series (the other covers the career of Captain Beefheart). These documentaries were of special interest to me because, despite my status as a full-blown geek more or less dictating that I love or at least pay lip service to these bands, I've never enjoyed listening to the music of either very much. Well, I take that back: I did undergo a brief Velvets phase during my teenage years, but I discarded them pretty quickly.

However, the continued importance attributed to The Velvet Underground compels me to re-examine their legacy at somewhat regular intervals, and *Under Review* gave an opportunity to do just such a thing. Each film follows the band's career more or less chronologically, with a bit of background information on the main players provided when necessary, and tells the stories through a combination of voiceover narration, critical comments from band members (though it should be noted that main players Lou Reed and John Cale are not interviewed for this volume), friends, producers, fellow musicians (band members Moe Tucker and Doug Yule are interviewed), artists, and a few rock critics, along with a nice selection of rare performance footage.

The films provide a reasonably in-depth analysis (this volume runs about 85 minutes), and even if there isn't much new information for the hardcore geeks, the performance footage is enough to make these films worthwhile. Newcomers will get a nice overview of each artist's career along with an abundance of suggested albums and tracks. I can't say I walked away from this viewing with a renewed appreciation of the band, but I did pick up a copy of the band's third album the next time I was in a record store, which I suppose says something.

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