



The Smiths: Under Review

What Lennon and McCartney were to the British music of the '60s and '70s, Morrissey and Johnny Marr were to the '80s. This DVD charts the influential quartet's rapid ascension and equally unpredictable dissolution, using insiders such as producer Stephen Street, long-term associate Grant Showbiz, and Factory Records impresario Tony Wilson to tell the tale. There are numerous "Top of the Pops" performances and videos, plus lots of inside dirt on the power struggle between Marr and Morrissey, who evolved from a shy intellectual into an ego-driven ball of attitude. What's missing are more substantial soundbytes from The Smiths themselves. Though Morrissey's often-controversial lyrics are analyzed and discussed ad infinitum, there's only a brief mention of Rourke's heroin addiction, and none of Joyce's lawsuit over songwriting royalties. All in all, this is a great primer for novices, but a bit unfulfilling for diehard Smiths fans. (B)

– B. Love