

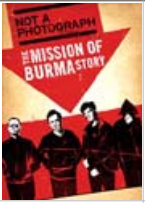


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## reviews

**MISSION OF BURMA**  
*Not a Photograph*  
(MVD)

Mission of Burma's influence in rock history is undeniable. The band worked hard at it during the first half of the 80's, crafting some of the most interesting American post punk and even though their recorded legacy was limited to an EP and a full-length, their material would resonate enough to influence a number of hugely popular bands that would in time shape rock history with their own hands. To say that on a scale of popularity Mission of Burma would barely make the rank, is an understatement. The band that The New Yorker labeled 'the most criminally undersung band of the 1980s', had in the years following its demise acquired cult status and became the stuff often championed by artists like Kurt Cobain or Frank Black.

*Not a Photograph* documents their road back to the stage in 2001. According to the band there were several reasons for a reunion; Joey Ramone had died, it was the 25th anniversary of punk rock, their chapter on Michael Azerrad's brilliant book *Our Band Could Be Your Life* made them nostalgic. Also Mark Kates, current record executive and former Burma promoter, was offering to manage the band. That's what most likely tipped the scale.

Professionally filmed, with great direction and even better edition (no filler in sight), the seventy minute long documentary *Not a Photograph* perfectly documents these grown ups getting their rock back on. As the promo proclaims it, this is what happens when 'the most influential band you've never heard reunites after 19 years.' Plenty of juicy extras here too; archival live performances from 1978, 1979 and 1981, six live performances from the 2002 *Inexplicable* tour, in studio recording footage from their come back Matador release *ONoffON* and a local news segment from 1983. In other words, all you need to learn about Mission of Burma and come off like you actually knew your punk directly from the source and not from the derivatives.

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