

## Mission of Burma

### NOT A PHOTOGRAPH: THE MISSION OF BURMA STORY

(MUSIC VIDEO DISTRIBUTORS, 70 MINUTES)

The fire still burns



**M**ission of Burma generated an ocean of (deserved) hype in 1983, and while it happened all over again when the group re-formed 19 years later, *Not a Photograph*, a document of that recommencement, eschews fanfare. Instead, the film calmly lays out the story of the Boston post-punk trio, stating the facts and leaving the praise to still-gobsmacked fans like Sonic Youth, Moby and Matador Records' Gerald Cosloy, not to mention regular-guy devotees. In doing so, the filmmakers match the attitude of MoB's principal members, who abandoned their band with as much ambivalence as they resurrected it (save drummer Peter Prescott, who vacillates between doubt and regret and giddiness). This is fitting, since Mission of Burma's fire was and is reserved for the music, which lost nothing even as it languished on a shelf for two decades.

**Special features:** None. RH

## Kenny Wayne Shepherd

### 10 DAYS OUT: BLUES FROM THE BACKROADS

(WARNER BROS./REPRISE, 100 MINUTES)

Whitey sings the blues



**S**ay what you will about whitey bluesguy Kenny Wayne Shepherd: the dude genuinely digs the blues. He may look like a reformed buttrocker trying to go legit when he's playing alongside B.B. King, the Muddy Waters and Howlin' Wolf bands or more obscure blues artists like Cool John Ferguson, but with this film, he's made a point that even his platinum-selling blues and rock albums had difficulty driving home. Nope, not the belabored statement that the blues fathered rock 'n' roll. As he rolls through Mississippi seeking out blues musicians both noteworthy and otherwise, he's saying this music runs in his blood just as much as in that of any porch-poundin' backwoods 90-year-old with a spittle-soaked harp and, hell, if it's not written into the DNA of anybody, pedigree be damned. More to the point, he's hoping more people will pay attention, whether it's to him or to some other howlin', testifyin' soul.

**Special features:** Additional performance footage, interviews, gallery. RH

## Paul Weller

### AS IS NOW

(LIBERATION ENTERTAINMENT, 85 MINUTES)

The Modfather from the floorboards up



**P**aul Weller picked the right time for a "making of" documentary: Last year's *As Is Now* was his most urgent, inspired album in years—he knew it, his band knew it—and it was serendipitous that the cameras captured the creative process as it unfolded. Written in a binge and recorded in a flurry,

the album found Weller emerging from a slump, and watching the spark reignite is contagious. When he speaks during interview segments, clichés often pop out—"rock 'n' roll is the only thing on Earth that unites everyone"; "I'm just trying to make people feel good again"—but the thing is, he's being sincere, so he doesn't come off dorky. (Best line: "I'm not fuckin' Bono or anything, but I'm making my own personal statement.") A live gig at the Jam's old

haunt the 100 Club serves mostly to showcase *As Is Now* (he tosses in a couple of Jam tunes), but despite the sweat pouring down his face, Weller and band seem oddly lethargic outside of the cloistered studio environment.

**Special features:** Interview, five studio recordings, Amsterdam visit. JT

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