



Mission of Burma

Not a Photograph--The Mission of Burma Story

MVD DVD

The world is flush with these rockumentaries. So much so that it's getting harder and harder to sit through the rising and falling (and in this case, resurrection)tales of various bands--but this one is special.

Not heralded much in their time and more or less forgotten were it not for Moby (who covered MOB's "hit", "That's When I Reach For My Revolver") and the book *Our Band Could Be Your Life* (where they were profiled along with Black Flag, Husker Du, the Butthole Surfers and others), Burma was a great big deal to a small group of people and seemed likely to remain that way. Disbanding in 1983 (because of one member's tinnitus and another's alcoholism). they reformed in this decade to play good-sized venues world-wide and actually get some of the recognition they deserved.

As the strange bridge between early 80's indie icons Black Flag on one side and REM on the other, Burma's music endures and prevails. What was considered noisy clatter 25 years ago is now "alternative" rock, only these guys could structure a song decently and wove the idea of sound effects (in their case, tape loops) quite well. What they didn't do too well and still don't do, is sing with much vigor--all of the Burma fellows take turns singing lead, none of them are standouts.

Not that it matters much--tunes like "Peking Spring" and "Academy Fight Song" are as hypnotically hooky as anything on FM Altie today and they are still coming up with vital songs, as their recent disc attests to. For some, this DVD will bring back the crazy days of being in the distinct minority, for newbies, a revelation that this trio was worth the legend and hype--get this one now!

- Johnny Angel