



MONDAY, JUNE 26, 2006

## The Smiths "Under Review"



THE SMITHS UNDER REVIEW (which streets tomorrow, June 27) is also of interest, but harder to recommend. It benefits from having access to Smiths producers John Porter and Stephen Street, and also Smiths second guitarist Craig Gannon, all of whom offer more of an insider's perspective of the group's sessions and inter-personal dynamics. However, the program loses some of its integrity because the opinions of the various commentators are so often diffuse and contradictory. I was pleased that at least one participant challenged the common view by arguing that STRANGEWAYS, HERE WE COME was actually their finest album, and even more pleased that the disc had no intention of being "Morrissey - Under Review" in disguise. The contributions of brilliant guitarist-

composer Johnny Marr are given at least equal time to Morrissey's, and Andy Rourke's suave and often melodic playing is also accorded proper respect. The clip quality here may be the most consistently good I've seen in this series overall, but the availability of so many TOP OF THE POPS clips and so forth may have inspired the filmmakers to take a more singles-oriented approach to documenting The Smiths' story. In England, The Smiths were widely known as a singles band, but their albums are their great legacy. The posthumously released live album, RANK, is not mentioned at all and the participants monologize on Morrissey and Marr's subsequent solo careers in a bonus featurette.

My feelings about THE SMITHS UNDER REVIEW can basically be boiled down to a single question: "How can I recommend a Smiths career overview that doesn't even mention 'There is a Light That Never Goes Out'?"

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