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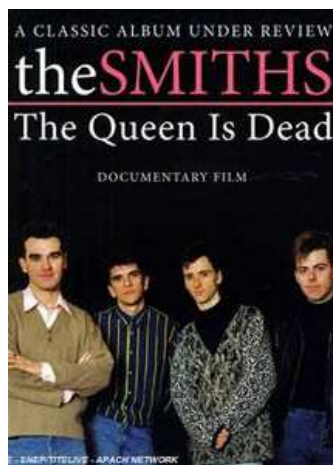
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The Smiths: The Queen is Dead

Sexy Intellectual/MVD

The Smiths: The Queen is Dead is the latest in the Classic Album Under Review series. This particular documentary takes a closer look at The Smiths third proper album and the follow-up to their cult-favorite Meat is Murder.

I was surprised at the power this album seems to wield as most of the musical illuminati's involved in this documentary see this as a seminal achievement for both the band and the then fledgling indie rock world. This is the point where The Smiths were basically falling apart but were being courted by the majors that had lots of money to throw at them. They are mentioned in the same breath many times with what was concurrently happening in Depeche Mode's career, with both being major figures who remained on indie labels to retain creative control. What is perhaps most striking about all of this is the fact that the band were having amazing success yet still couldn't keep it together. It feels as if there was a major class of artistic egos and perhaps it's that that makes this album such a revered work decades later. It's the sound of real people with real struggles.

The DVD includes rare footage of and samples from every track on The Queen is Dead. Those interviewed include the band members themselves, as well as the album's co-producer, Stephen Street, the author of a Morrissey biography, Guitar Magazine contributor Gavin Hopps, the one-time Smiths road manager Grant Showbiz, and more.

If you are a fan of The Smiths then this is a must have documentary as the story is largely told by the people who were there. If you have never heard The Smith before, you may still enjoy this if you have an interest in rock and roll history, particularly the highly influential indie rock acts of this millennium.

Reviewed by Mark Fisher

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