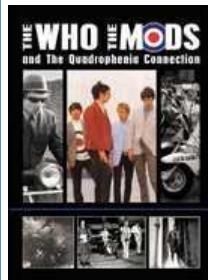




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The Who, The Mods And The Quadrophenia Connection

MVD Visual // 2009 // 94 Minutes // Not Rated
Reviewed by Judge Victor Valdivia // November 19th, 2009

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Scales of Justice

Judgment: 55

Perp Profile

Studio: [MVD Visual](#)

Video Formats:

- Full Frame

Audio Formats:

- PCM 2.0 Stereo (English)

Subtitles:

- None

Running Time: 94 Minutes

Release Year: 2009

MPAA Rating: Not Rated

Genres:

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The Charge

The band, the movement, the album, the movie.

Distinguishing Marks

- Interview
- Bios

The Case

There's conceivably a good story somewhere in **The Who, the Mods and the Quadrophenia Connection**, but the problem is that the documentary A) doesn't know what it is and B) doesn't know how to tell it. MVD Visual has done a reasonable job in producing this DVD, even going so far as to license several important songs by both The Who and other artists, but the actual storytelling is so muddled and tedious that you won't really care that much. For all the good that hearing the songs does, you'd do just as well to put on a Who album and read up on Mods on Wikipedia (see Accomplices section).

What exactly is this DVD about? Even after watching it, you won't be sure. In theory, it tells how the early years of The Who's career, in which they were closely tied to the British Mod movement, affected their work, especially their 1973 album *Quadrophenia*. Actually, it's hard to say if that's true because the documentary doesn't do a good job of explaining anything. For one thing, no one actually even defines what the Mod movement is. Considering the list of people interviewed includes self-proclaimed "Mod experts" Paolo Hewitt and Terry Rawlins, it's a huge flaw that anyone who comes into this DVD without knowing anything about the unique 1960s British working-class subculture that was Mod will be confused and annoyed.

The failure to even explain the particulars of Mod, however, isn't the documentary's biggest failing. Where it really goes wrong is that after the first half-hour or so, the film completely forgets to discuss the connection between The Who's career and Mod. For most of its running time, it's little more than yet another rehash of The Who's career, except without any original insights. The reason for this is that none of the band's members or associates are interviewed for this disc. The only people with any connection to The Who seen here are Richard Barnes, Pete Townshend's college roommate and author of a Who biography, and Ron Nevison, who engineered the recording of *Quadrophenia*. Though both do have some interesting thoughts and comments, neither of them can really give much insight into the actual creative decisions the band made. The remaining interviewees are worse. Consisting entirely of lesser-known journalists and members of late-'70s Mod revivalist bands, including the Chords and the Purple Hearts, they do little more than recite their favorite Who songs, turning this DVD into a dull and unoriginal rehash of The Who's story. Since the band has told its story many times before, including on at least *three* previous DVDs, this entire portion, which takes up nearly the rest of the DVD, is useless. Who cares what these people have to say about why they like a particular song, especially when their comments add up to little more than "I like that particular song"? If the documentary is meant to examine the link between Mod and The Who's music, then why doesn't it actually explain what that link is? The last 10 minutes or so, which discuss the brief late-'70s Mod revival in the U.K. prompted by the film version of *Quadrophenia*, are actually more interesting, but the documentary is way too rushed to really do this story justice. Instead of wasting so much time rehashing The Who's career, it would have been better to hear the story of the Mod revival from the bands and writers who participated in it. If anything, that might have made for a more interesting DVD in its own right.

It might have been possible for the DVD to rectify these flaws with some well-chosen extras, but the only extra of

Accomplices

- [Wikipedia: Mod \(subculture\)](#)



significance, apart from some useless text promos and bios, is some more minutes with Barnes (8:45). He's mildly informative, but this is too meager to count for much. Since the DVD's producers actually made the effort to license Who songs (as well as others by artists like Booker T & the MGs), why not include some performances by the Mod revivalists as extras? At least then this might have been worth a look for viewers curious about the post-punk era in Britain.

As it stands, though, **The Who, the Mods and the Quadrophenia Connection** is of little value. The discussion of Mod is sloppy and incomplete, the discussion of The Who's career is redundant and tedious, and the thread between the two is left unexplained. Even the licensing of Who songs is pointless, since they're not used to much effect. The video and audio transfers are both quite solid, but that's hardly reason enough to buy this disc. Viewers interested in the link between Mod and The Who's music would do better to read Barnes's book or Dave Marsh's exhaustive Who biography *Before I Get Old*, both of which are more informative and coherent than this DVD.

The Verdict

Guilty of adding nothing to the subject.

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- [Aguaria](#)

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