

Jay-Z
Reasonable Doubt
Eagle Vision

The rap sub-culture is one that not everyone understands. However, this DVD that highlights the jigga man's debut album from 1996 may help.

What made the album such a landmark success for Jay-Z was that there was no major label distribution, yet it reached #23 on the Billboard 200 list. "He gave a very lurid depiction of street life like nobody before him," says writer and filmmaker Barry Michael Cooper. "He was the voice of the crack generation."

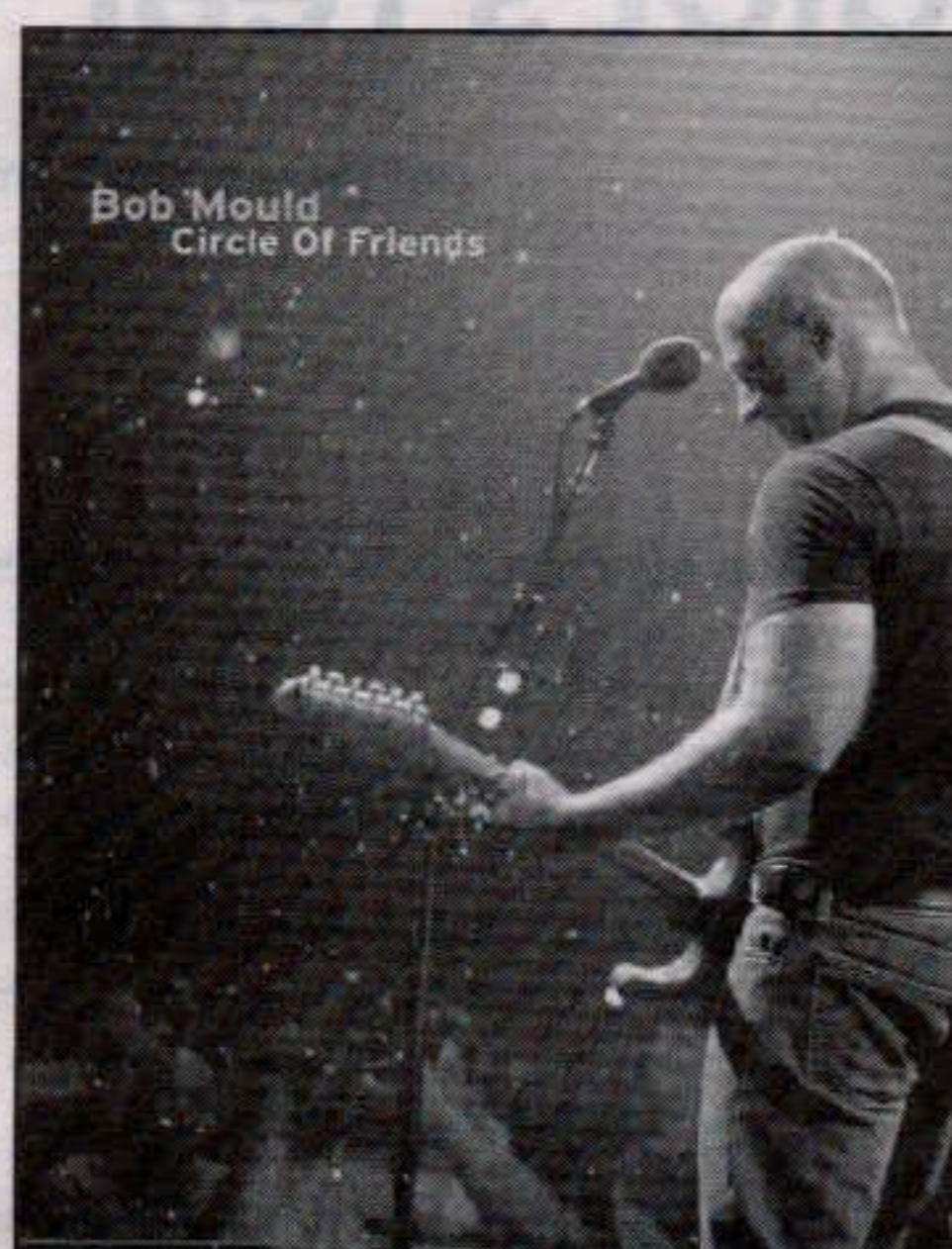
The DVD includes Jay Hova in conversation alongside his rapping cohorts, producers and other artists who respect the east coast entrepreneur. Pictures of his neighbourhood, family, and friends are shown as the rap mogul discusses his upbringing and how living in the projects greatly influenced his outlook on life, his attitude, and what he had to do in order to live the great American dream. "It was only natural for me to take to this kind of music," says the 37-year-old rapper. "Reasonable Doubt was the foundation of me leaving one life and moving to another."

Unfortunately, the DVD drags slightly in the middle as it continually flashes to Jay and friends discussing the lyrics of songs with no music in the background. It's a short watch at just under one hour, so it's not too difficult to sit through, but if you are not really into people pumping their own tires verbally, this probably isn't for you. However, seeing Jay-Z at clubs from 1995 and '96, rapping with Memphis Bleek, Biggie Smalls and Foxy Brown is quite nostalgic and cool to watch.

• **Trevor Bacque**

Bob Mould
Circle of Friends
MVD Visual

At a place in his life where playing songs from his past is apparently no longer a bad thing, Circle of Friends finds Bob Mould completely energized as he tears through twenty-



plus years of fan favorites, from Husker Du to Sugar to his own solo output.

Recorded at the 9:30 Club in Washington, D.C. in 2005, Mould is joined onstage by an all-star band featuring Brendan Canty of Fugazi (who also produced the film), Jason Narducy of Verbow and Richard Morel. The 23-song set list never lets up, contains no filler and many of the older songs have new life breathed into them because of the contributions of the backing musicians. As for Mould, his trademark guitar sound is still front and center, and his relaxed (and dare I say happy) stage demeanor is a nice change from the often overly serious persona he carried with him throughout the better part of his musical career.

Although many fans will no doubt be drawn to this release for the Husker Du songs featured on it, it was the chance to finally see material from Sugar's incredible Copper Blue album performed live that was the real selling point for me. And while a lot of Mould's solo releases since that period could certainly be considered hit or miss, the song selection from those records is concise and enjoyable.

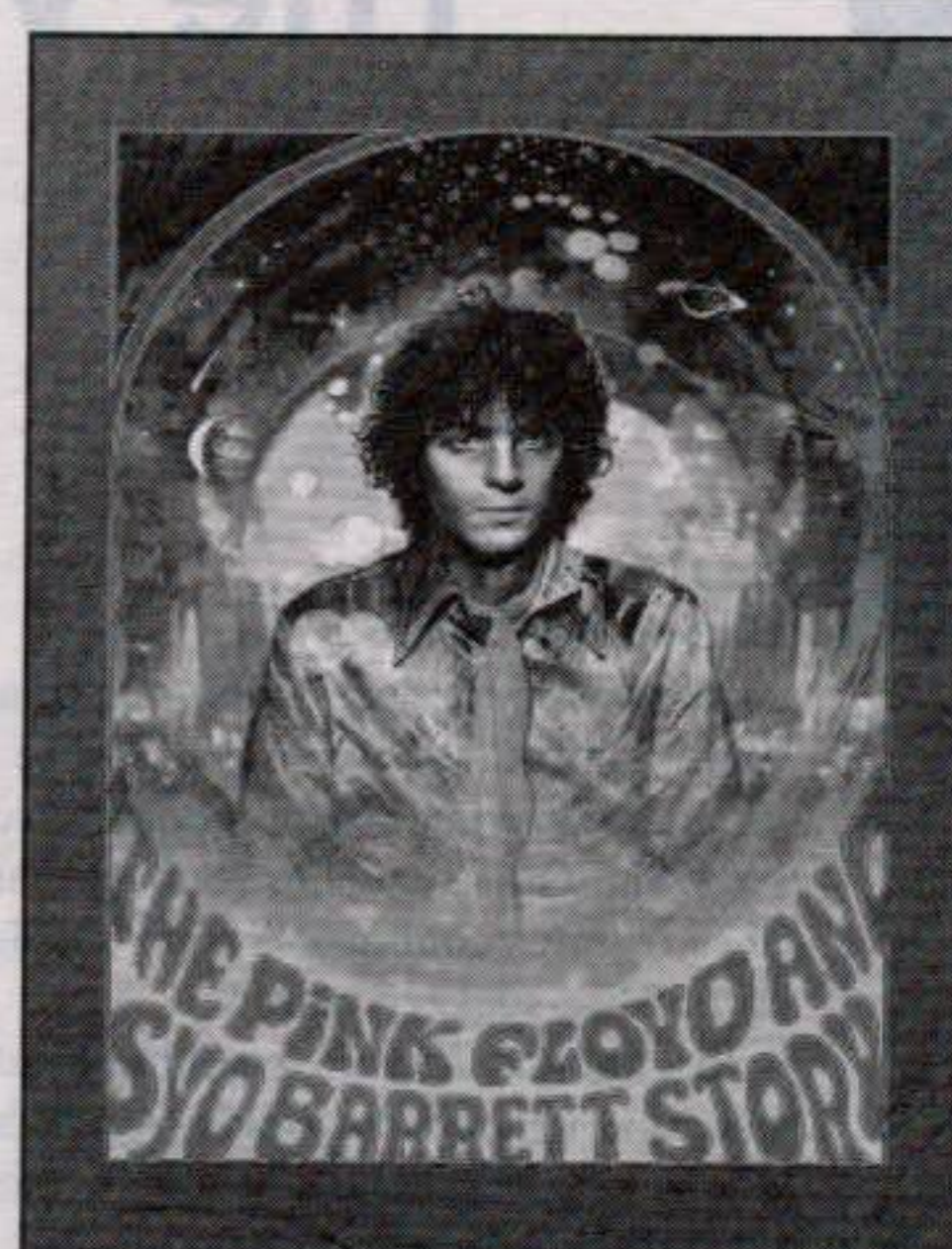
Shot with multiple camera angles and containing great sound, Circle of Friends is a must-see concert film for any fan, and serves as the only true collection of songs covering Mould's entire impressive body of work.

• **Todd Harkness**

Pink Floyd
The Pink Floyd And Syd Barrett Story
MVD

You'd be hard pressed to tell from the drug-addled, vegetative state he spent the last 30 years of his life wallowing in, but Syd Barrett was once an innovative musical genius.

On Pink Floyd's debut *The Piper At The Gates Of Dawn*, his eccentricities and unique song writing abilities on classic psych-pop songs like "Lucifer Sam", "Take Up Thy Stethoscope And Walk" and especially "Bike" show where followers like Robyn Hitchcock, Ariel Pink and Wooden Wand got their schtick. However, it's Syd's droning space-rock tracks like "Astronomy Domine" and



the epic "Insterstellar Overdrive" that truly defined the tune in, drop out spirit of the 60s.

Unfortunately, Barrett got too caught up in the counter-culture himself, and after experimenting with an indiscriminate amount of LSD (his first trip was captured in a short film, briefly shown here) simply lost his spark. This unfortunate tale is told through a decent collection of footage from Barrett's time with the band (both candid and live), a rudimentary run-through of his Floyd songs and later solo efforts, and modern interviews with the surviving Floyd members, friends of Syd and others.

From the first clip of Roger Waters describing the song "Shine On You Crazy Diamond" (which he wrote mind you), as powerful and "very good", these first-person accounts are much more interesting than the usual commentary of critics and assorted "experts" in other documentary films such as the Under Review series. Graham Coxon of Blur also pops up here, although he doesn't offer much other than his appreciation of an "insane goose" sound effect that Syd used.

So whether you already know the story and these songs or not - and despite its hideous menu-screen graphics - this DVD is definitely worth a watch.

• **Jesse Locke**

Bruce Springsteen
Tales of the Working Man: Under Review 1978-82
MVD

Between '78 and '82, Bruce Springsteen released a series of brooding and intensely introspective albums that verged on disturbing: *Darkness On The Edge of Town*, *The River* and *Nebraska*. Reviewed by a "panel" of biographers, rock critics, historians, cultural commentators, an ex-band mate and a full-blown fanzine (Backstreets) operator, *Tales of the Working man* engages largely in the kind of literary-psychoanalysis for which Springsteen himself often criticized both his critics and loyalists—over-intellectualizing.

While there's certainly a great deal in Springsteen's work from this period to mull