

**the // skyway **
the replacements mailing list

issue #99
(march 24, 2016)

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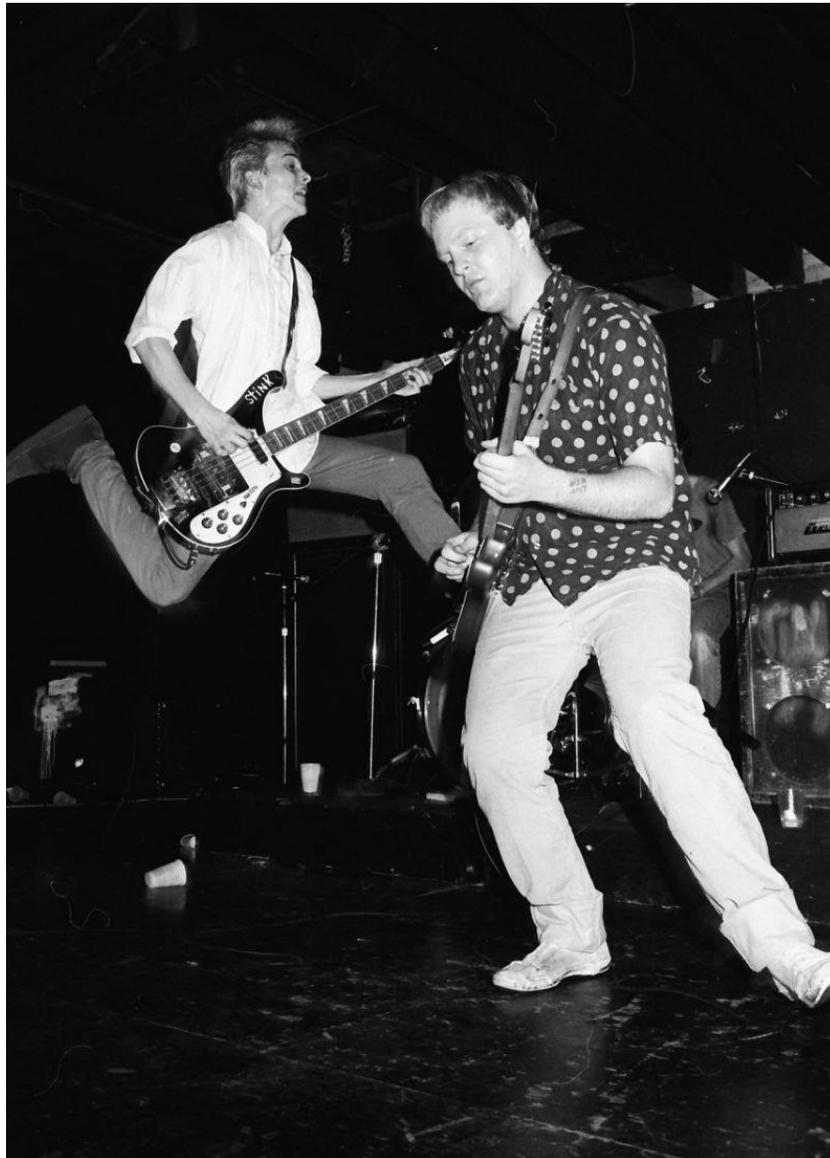


photo: Steve Linsenmayer

GO

In the six months since the last *Skyway* issue, I moved to Barcelona, started teaching at a high school and playing guitar in band called *Cola Jet Set* that has been playing somewhere in Spain almost every weekend. It is remarkable luck to get to move to yet another country as well as play rock music again, but it also makes it difficult to get anything else done, like put this together.

Now that it's Spring Break, here it is. And it coincides with two remarkable things in Replacements-land: the release of an album from Paul Westerberg (under the name *The I Don't Cares*) and the release of a remarkably detailed biography of the Replacements by Bob Mehr. Both of them were worth the wait, and both of them are better I ever hoped.

Having put out this newsletter for over two decades, I've met hundreds of people who have told their stories about how this band affected them in some way. Some introduced me to new bands, new places, sometimes even new countries or a new job. But one of the most remarkable human beings I ever met doing this was John Anderson. John was a fan of just about everything. He sent out a famous weekly newsletter in the D.C. area about concerts people should absolutely not miss, bands they should hear, books they should read. His enthusiasm carried over into how he was with people. You could randomly either get a copy of a record in the mail from him, or a letter saying right now he was listening to your mix tape you made in the summer of 1996 and how great it was.

A year ago, John left this world all too prematurely due to MLS. As soon as he received his diagnosis, he did what everyone says they would do: he took a trip around the world to every continent he could with his wife. He got to meet his idol Bruce Springsteen (a remarkable story: <http://www.backstreets.com/johnanderson.html>), he made sure to catch the Replacements at Riotfest while he still could, he got a private concert by Matthew Ryan, and he never stopped writing up to his last days (<http://whatever.scalzi.com/category/john-anderson>). It has been a year and somehow the world continues, but poorer without John in it. It is a shame, because I know he would have loved both this Westerberg album and Bob Mehr's book. Along with his wife Amanda, these are combinations of his favorite things.

And whenever people wrote this last time year, wondering whether they were going to make it to a Replacements reunion concert that was a 5 hour drive away, I always thought of John and said, "You never know when it's going to be the last. Go while you can."

You, you made it around the sun another time, you made it through another winter. From now on, don't miss out on *anything*.

m@.

WHERE WE LAST LEFT OFF

So in case you have forgotten what it was like, **Adam Mead ran across what he wrote in his journal in 2013:**

Expectations that grow over time are bound to create unreasonable wants and needs, stretch this out over 22 years and the problems you'll run into will most likely expand into the stratosphere. Sitting in our Toronto hotel room the night before The Replacements were to take the stage after 22 years away, my brother and I sat, switching between conversations about what was on television, to what "could" happen. I don't think either of us really knew what we wanted, or could expect. It's hard beginning a story about The Replacements as if it all began yesterday or a week ago, it all began back in 1984.

My older brother Andy and I shared a room growing up, and by 1984 he had assembled a small library of music, stacked in crates against the wall. He worked at the A&P, and when he left for work I would filter through those stacks of records, venturing off into other worlds, led by men and boys with guitars, and hair the size of mountains. I watched Andy walk out of our yard, pass behind our garage, reappear in the alley, off to the A&P. I sat down and began to flip through the records. I can only remember one record I saw that day. Four guys on a rooftop, looking cooler than fuck! I carefully pulled it from the sleeve, put it on the turntable. Needle hit vinyl and BOOM! Now, I understand what time can do to memories, how they can get inflated, distorted, blurred, romanticized. But this one is as if it took place yesterday. I went from passively listening to music on the radio, to loving music. I heard a voice I had never conceived existed. Filled with life, anger, hurt, empathy, and understanding. Guitars played loud, soft, fast, slow, with care, with total disregard. Over the course of 40 some minutes, my place in my world changed. I wasn't any more popular, or understood, but I felt those things when that record played. How did these four guys on this roof come to be in my room, playing those drums, black ones, playing bass, and singing, screaming, and whaling on those guitars? At 15, the colors of my world were forever shifted. As years rolled on, I would buy records they liked in articles, move to Minneapolis to go the Architecture school, but honestly, the boys played a part. I would refer to them by their first names, as if they were my friends, my brothers.

Standing at Riot Fest, lights drop, two of the four boys run on stage. The hair I had at 15 has shifted locations but it still stands on end. I am momentarily frozen. Those guitars take off and whale, the bass launches into the air, and that wondrous voice soars. I'm flying. Over the course of the night I yell FUCK for various reasons, all due to JOY, pure unadulterated JOY. Not a moment is spent thinking; just feeling; loving this moment! Love You Til Friday careens into Maybelline, with such abandon, FUCK!

4 days have passed, and all I can say is I still feel a little light headed/hearted, and have the sense that maybe I'm still flying...

Beyond thanks to Paul, Tommy, Chris, Bob, Slim, Steve, Dave, and Josh...you'll never know.

Tracey Brown Hamilton wrote about how in the midst of being an ex-patriate parent on another continent, **the Replacements reunion shows were almost therapy.**

I recently watched a beautiful but devastating documentary about the power of music, in particular its effect on dementia patients. In the film, *Alive Inside*, sufferers are temporarily brought back to animated, lucid life — not with medication, but with an iPod.

Listening to music specific to important times in their lives triggered emotional reactions and memories long inaccessible. According to the film, "Music ... takes you to a place where you can leave your regimen, and go off in a world that you create and you connect with on your own terms."

I'm a mother, not a dementia patient, and forgive the leap. But having three children under 5 means my life is dictated by a regimen: one of constant responsibility and reaction. It's easy to forget myself, to reduce the other things that make me tick to luxuries and indulgences. . . .

Music is one of the first things I learned to defend, and which held a personal value for me that I could articulate. It's a very individual thing, the emotions music can evoke, the feelings and ideas it can trigger, the way it can soothe. It is, in that sense, a sort of worship.

So it is fitting that another band from my youth, the Replacements, recently played the Amsterdam leg of their "Back By Unpopular Demand" tour in an old church.

But now in my 40s, I wondered what I was looking for. Certainly I didn't want a kiss from Paul Westerberg --that just would have been weird -- and while I looked forward to seeing the band play, it wasn't with the same youthful anticipation. I knew they were just middle-aged people like most of us in attendance, and not prophets.

And then it began.

"Stay right there, go no further
Don't get a doctor, don't get my mother
It's too far to walk, gotta decide
Turn around, we're takin' a ride"

The crowd, including me, was transformed. We were teenagers, drunk for the first time, filled with energy and optimism and a liberating rebelliousness. Because music takes you right back to where you were "then."

It was cathartic to spend an hour or more screaming lyrics of Replacements songs from long ago, and fifteen minutes after the band closed with "Bastards of Young," I was back to my present self, quietly walking along a canal, calculating the babysitter costs and thinking about how very early my children would wake the next day. And I felt happy and ready to return to that life. I felt recharged and even a little badass.

You have to escape it sometimes, this grown-up, parenting life. Not because it's terrible, but because it's impossible to do well if you forget who you are at the core.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/tracy-brown-hamilton/why-middle-aged-moms-still-need-to-rock-out_b_7790644.html

A few days later, at the show before the reunion came to an end, **Simon Wright interviewed Paul Westerberg** before their last show in London.

Noticeably absent from both London gigs was fan-fave 'Here Comes A Regular'. How come? "It's too many words. I monkeyed with it a few weeks ago, I was asked to do Dave Letterman's farewell programme and they wanted that song but it's a long way to go for a maudlin drinking song and I didn't have the patience to remember it."

Do songs drift in and out of relevance with you? "Yes. Playing something like 'Unsatisfied' now could be an act but I know that people want to hear it so I'll mean it while I'm playing it, and then be able to put it down. But a lot of songs from that era were lived, and then written so some of the memories take me down a bit of black hole"

Are you seeing younger fans coming to gigs? "I am told there are. I never make eye contact with the audience, I just look at the back of the hall."

"I've lost a lot of weight doing this. That makes me think perhaps a bit of this is good for me. But then getting caught up in this rock'n'roll thing, not knowing what to do with myself, I can't relax. It's a way of life that I am not comfortable with all the time. Right now everyone else is saying what club shall we go to, and I have no desire to do that. I've done that. And I've got to go now, I've done enough talking."

With that, Paul gets up, bids me goodnight and disappears into the night in search of...what?

<https://onlyrockandroll.london/2015/09/24/resurrected-replacements-rock-roundhouse/>

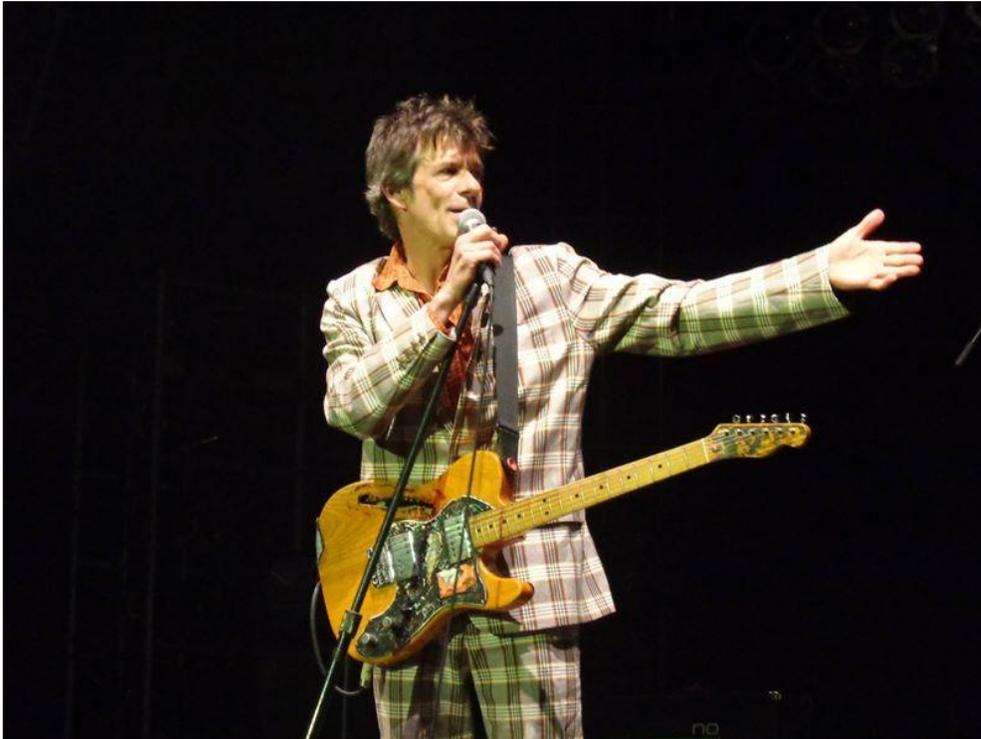


photo: Jeanette Hrushka

TROUBLE BOYS

Last year, I said I never waited for anything as long as seeing the Replacements reunite. That record has now been surpassed by the time waiting for a book about the history of the Replacements written with the band. Like waiting to see every band from 1983-1995 you ever wanted to see reunite, or another Paul Westerberg/Bob Mould/Soul Asylum album, or for Andy Kaufmann to suddenly return and say “surprise!”, the wait is over (except for the last part).

You might recognize Bob Mehr from his landmark 2008 *Spin* article about the Replacements, or his liner notes in the Big Star box set or a recently released collection of *The Essential Kinks* or the *Tim* reissue. Now he has finally released the book he spent nearly a decade researching about – and with – the Replacements. TROUBLE BOYS was written with the cooperation of Paul Westerberg and Tommy Stinson and provides the most in-depth view of the Replacements we are likely to see.

Why now? According to an interview with Mehr in the *Star Tribune*:

I also feel like they wanted to understand and cultivate their legacy a little better. Other people had made attempts to tell their story — and all those projects had merit in their own way — but there hadn’t been anything the band had really been involved in themselves.

<http://www.startribune.com/trouble-boys-book-dares-to-tell-all-on-the-replacements/370185921>

You can see the promotional page for the book at <http://www.replacementsbook.com> and a video about the making of the book at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hSLfij-X5f0> that includes a short interview with Mehr. (Warning: the video will only make you realize you are now going to have to wait another ten years for a Replacements documentary that shows all this new footage that we get glimpses of.)

Craig Wright of the *Daily Emerald*’s review gives a summary of “the unrivaled Replacements guide”:

The bold prologue begins at Bob Stinson’s funeral with the haunting image of his son Joey, who suffered from cerebral palsy and was quadriplegic, grasping Bob’s cold hands at the open-casket service, while the rest of the band sheds tears in a corner with former manager Peter Jespersen. After five pages, it’s clear that the content of this book will spare no detail too unpleasant.

Much like a Replacements song, the writing feels both meticulously crafted and effortless. The stories spring to life through new and preexisting interviews with the band, and those who know them best. Readers are inserted into Oar Folkjokeopus where Jespersen discovered the ‘Mats, the CC Club that inspired “Here Comes A

Regular” and the corner on St. Mark’s Place where Westerberg watched Alex Chilton of Big Star check on his hidden marijuana stash by the trash.

Every story that fans proudly told one another while waiting in lines during last year’s reunion shows are immortalized here, while countless other unheard tales of bored midwestern teens with an unnatural knack for chaos become forever engraved in ‘Mats lore.

<http://www.dailymerald.com/2016/02/02/review-mehrs-trouble-boys-is-the-unrivaled-replacements-guide>

Trouble Boys goes into details we never imagined would be revealed and stories that we didn't know existed: each of the band members’ childhoods, their early ambitions, how strained relations were with Twin/Tone, why the band wasn’t completely happy with *Tim*, why Bob Stinson was kicked out and/or quit, how perfect Slim was for the band, the importance of Peter Jespersen and why the band cut loose the man who had done so much for them, the effect of their marriages on the band, how crazy the band was on tour and how and exhausting they were to their management, how out of control the release party was for *Pleased to Meet Me* was, how they made themselves impossible for Sire to promote, how difficult (and absolutely crazy) it was to record *Don't Tell A Soul* (twice), how broken Westerberg and the band was by *All Shook Down*, and what it was like walking offstage from their ‘last’ concert on July 4, 1991. Bob Mehr successfully captures how the band was both simultaneously an American treasure and an out of control train that ran in spite of itself and was lucky it lasted as long as it did, to write some of the best American rock music of the 20th century, somehow without ever having a hit.

As **Jaan Uhelszki** of *Rhapsody* puts it:

Equal parts Greek Tragedy, J.D. Salinger short story and John Updike novel, Mehr gets out of the way and allows the principals to tell their own tales and then seamlessly stitches all the pieces together in 520 pages to show how any other outcome than what transpired was unthinkable as well as impossible. But still, reading accounts of Bob Stinson’s harrowing abuse at the hands of his stepfather, you hope for a different outcome, even knowing full well the facts of the story. When Bob finally succumbs to a life of hard living at the age of 35, it’s like a foregone conclusion.

In the excellent epilogue, *Trouble Boys* takes us all the way through the band’s 2013 successful but ultimately turbulent reunion, inspired initially when Westerberg and Stinson got to together to record an EP to pay for Dunlap’s medical bills after he suffered a series of strokes. While they balked at first, Dunlap insisted from his hospital bed in a strong, unslurred voice that his former bandmates “go play.”

But the story doesn’t end there. Mehr takes us through Westerberg’s hard won sobriety, his two divorces and six solo albums as well as becoming a card-carrying member of the Sandwich Generation; caring for his young son and dying father.

Mehr injects a searing humanity into the rather unlovable character that emerged in the earlier chapters of *Trouble Boys*. He does similar justice to Stinson's, Dunlap's and Mars' lives; wrapping up all the loose ends and histories, showing how they all fared post-Replacements. In the end, Mehr's book is as much mystery novel as it is rock biography with an O. Henry ending, like Westerberg's best solo songs. Which is really no ending at all.

<http://news.rhapsody.com/2016/03/01/the-replacements-rocks-beloved-trouble-boys>

The book has been getting rave reviews in national publications, including the *LA Times* (<http://www.latimes.com/books/la-ca-jc-replacements-20160313-story.html>) and a 9/10 in *UNCUT*. Some people have written to say that it was a hard book to read, that it sometimes paints their heroes in an unflattering light, and it wasn't the happiest of stories. As the first manager of the Replacements, Peter Jesperson, put it in the *Star Tribune*:

"Some of it's hard to read for various reasons," said Jesperson, whose firing by the band is also covered in depth. "But I think, for the most part, it's an accurate and truthful book."

The summary from **Gavin Edwards** is the best I've seen so far:

Mehr, a critic at the Memphis *Commercial Appeal*, conducted over 200 interviews for this book — just about everybody associated with the band, including Westerberg and Tommy Stinson. While only the most devoted fans will cherish the digressions on Minneapolis's leading nightclubs in the 1980s, Mehr's tendency toward over-documentation also gives the story behind just about every crucial Replacements song. The chorus of the almost-a-hit "Alex Chilton," asking, "What's that song?": the answer was Big Star's "Watch the Sunrise." The inspiration for "Androgynous": a period when Westerberg was hanging with R.E.M.'s Peter Buck, drinking and messing around with eye shadow. The target of "Waitress in the Sky," seemingly a stewardess who stopped serving Westerberg: it's actually the obnoxious narrator, as Westerberg intended the song as a gesture of solidarity with his sister, a career flight attendant.

The stories of mayhem on the road are as entertaining as one would hope for — the band almost tips over their van on the highway by moshing to the Bad Brains, Bob Stinson arrives at a gig in Genoa pursued by an Italian mob brandishing knives — but as they accumulate through the pages of *Trouble Boys*, it becomes clear that even more than music or booze, the band loved self-sabotage. Any time they had an opportunity to make an alliance — with a radio station, with a producer, with a label — they found a way to foul their nest instead. "If they were an ordinary band, they would have been dropped," observed one of their managers. "But it was the brilliance of Paul's writing, and the humanity that would come out of him, and the magic of the group, that would keep everyone believing . . . even when you wanted to kill them." . . .

Not coincidentally, those songs are all about the Replacements themselves: "Left of the Dial" is an ode to the college radio culture that nurtured them; "Alex Chilton," while nominally

about the Memphis singer, is a fantasy that pictures millions of fans nationwide screaming for a cult musical act; “Bastards of Young” is Westerberg’s finest screw-up manifesto (“God, what a mess / On the ladder of success / Where you take one step and miss the whole first rung”). Westerberg’s greatest musical subject was always his own band, and he added to their lore with each song — just like every time they insulted a radio programmer or cursed on live TV, they were burnishing their legend rather than striving for stardom. That anti-commercial attitude made their wallets lighter, but it also made them worthy of a 474-page biography. *Trouble Boys* is a *Bulfinch’s Mythology* for a time of indie rock legend (swapping Minneapolis for Olympus, beer for ambrosia, and reportage for the oral tradition). The Goo Goo Dolls had hit singles; the Replacements became immortal.

<http://www.barnesandnoble.com/review/trouble-boys-the-true-story-of-the-replacements>

From **Simon Wright’s** interview with Bob Mehr:

I had a sense, instinctively, that there was more to the band’s personal stories that would shed light on their music and career. That was part of why I wanted to write the book in the first place. People so often talk about the Replacements’ wild behavior and self-destructive actions – they’ve been glorified and vilified in equal measure for that. But I felt like no one had really asked “why?” Why did they do what they did? Why did they live the way they did? So for me, I wanted to know the answer to that, and I sensed that I would find what I was looking for in their childhoods, formative years and early backgrounds. I didn’t know how deep and dark and difficult the story would be, but I was prepared to find out.

<https://onlyrockandroll.london/2016/03/24/trouble-boys-mehr-and-jesperson-discuss/>

The book pulls off something that was always going to be difficult with a biography about the Replacements: how to remain deep, both in details and emotional intensity, but always stay objective and non-judgmental. The excerpt that both shows **how crazy the band got**, as well as **Mehr’s writing style**, is the part about their **show in Houston in 1985**:

Jesperson finally returned, he walked into the dressing room to find the band had “actually embedded bottles of Heineken into the drywall. Not only was the liquor gone, but I was required to get them more.”

Outside, fans did double takes: Paul and Tommy and a couple of local women “were sitting out front of the venue, in the gravel parking lot, in a kiddie pool, with no water in it, completely fucking drunk,” said Bunch. Meanwhile, Chilton’s set was being marred by some hecklers. “So Paul and Tommy dragged the kiddie pool out into the middle of the people who were being assholes, just to mess with them,” recalled Wilkes.

The ‘Mats began. As a local alt-weekly reported: “To say ‘degenerate’ implies that the Replacements started out in control.” Drinking Jack Daniels from the bottle, Paul

stumbled back into the amps, and then fell into Chris Mars's drum kit. "I was legless when we went on and couldn't play at all," said Westerberg. "We finally tried 'Johnny B. Goode,' thinking that might come easy, but I couldn't finish a song."

After about thirty minutes of this ineptitude, Westerberg knew what had to be done: "It became plain that we could suck or we could incite a riot and get this thing over with," he said.

Charles Weese was at the show himself and gave another first-hand account:

Sat right behind the baby pool while Alex played. Drank from the bottle of Jack. Didn't know it was the band until they went on stage. One of the most fun shows I've ever seen. My now-wife was with me at the show. We drank beer in the parking lot with the Austin band Doctors Mob after the show and tried to fathom what we had just witnessed.

I got a chance to ask Mehr some questions about *Trouble Boys*:

What's your own Replacements story? When did you first get to hear the band, and did you ever get to see them live?

Bob Mehr: As a kid I happened to catch the Replacements on their now infamous *Saturday Night Live* appearance in 1986. I had no idea who they were at that point as an 11 year-old kid. I like to say that I experienced them before I ever heard their music. Certainly, that performance captured me instantly -- it was so unlike anything I'd seen from bands up to that point. There was an almost disregard for the moment -- they didn't care that this was their big break, or that millions of people were watching. That attitude and energy leapt out of the TV screen. It was another couple years until I discovered their albums, but I was hooked from the first. I did manage to see them live a couple times, during the Slim-era of the band, when I was in high school. Saw them open a show on the Petty tour and again during the dates for "All Shook Down."

Aside: in another conversation with Bob Mehr, he told me that watched the 1986 Saturday Night Live performance with Paul and Tommy for the first time in their lives as they had never seen the playback before. He said their reactions were a combination of nostalgia, whimsy, embarrassment and awe.

Numerous people have attempted to write this book over the last 30 years, but never were able to get the band to open up and tell their side of the story. How did you get anointed as the chosen one?

I joke that the band was instantly swayed by my charm and charisma. But the truth is I was tenacious in pitching the project, but also very lucky in terms of my timing.

I approached Paul and Tommy with the idea to do this at a point -- in 2007 -- where I think they were finally ready to reflect on their own lives, and wrestle with the Replacements' legacy. If I'd have asked a few years earlier than I did, I don't think they would have agreed -- or if they had, I don't think I could've gotten as deep with them as I did.

Frankly, it's all down to Paul and Tommy and Slim and Bob's family and Peter Jesperson and so many others being willing to deal with a lot of tough issues and painful things from the past and to be honest about all of it. If people hadn't been as willing to trust me and the process, I don't think the book would be what it is. Fortunately, everyone understood, or came to see, that I was being incredibly serious about the work and so they felt the need to respond to that just as seriously.

Paul's tone in your book is distinctly different than any interview I have ever read with him. How did he finally decide to talk about the years of the Replacements in such an open way?

The first time Paul and I met face to face was in the summer of 2004. I was doing a story on him for the now-defunct magazine Harp around the time of "Folker." This was maybe nine or ten months after Paul's father had passed, and just as his own son, Johnny, was really growing up. Paul had lost a parent and was raising a kid, and so I think naturally that tends to make you more reflective, about life, the cycles of life, and your place in all that. He was unusually open and thoughtful in that first meeting discussing himself, his family, and his past. That was an important way for our relationship to begin. And so several years later when we started talking about the book, and I began doing interviews for it, we just continued in that way. No bullshit, no agenda.

From the first formal discussion we had about the book Paul told me: "The only way to do this, and make it mean something, is to be honest, painfully so." He realized being honest about himself and the band and his life might not always reflect well on him, that it was going to be difficult, but he was willing to do it. Again, he deserves the credit, because he didn't have to go all in, so to speak. He did it because he knew it was necessary in order for people to have a real understanding of where the Replacements came from and what they were. I think during the process and even at the end, Paul was worried that he comes off as a villain or as the bad guy. But I told him there's no heroes or villains in this book, just human beings -- flawed, beautiful, talented, frustrating human beings. It's not pro wrestling, it's not black and white, good guys versus the bad guys. This is life -- it can be messy, complex and there's no easy truths. I think the book reflects that.

What was the era that was the most difficult to write about?

Certainly, exploring the tragedies of Bob's childhood were tough. I'm a journalist and have done investigative work, but primarily I'm a music critic and writer. The non-music subject matter in this book -- addiction, abuse, mental health issues -- were things

that I really had to learn about and study in order to understand the band. That was the hardest part. But also just mentally and emotionally for me -- living with these people, reliving their lives in a sense, and having all the Replacements rattling in my head for so many years was tough. I've had a lot of crazy anxiety dreams that I'm sure a shrink would have a field day interpreting. But whatever my own struggles, I felt that I had a duty and a responsibility to tell the story honestly and accurately. I hope I did that.

Did you ever get a chance to meet Bob Stinson, while he was with the Replacements or afterwards?

Never met Bob, but had an amazing opportunity to watch several hours of unseen video interviews with him, courtesy of a great guy named Steve Birmingham, who talked to Bob about his life a year before he passed away. Just to hear Bob's voice and see him in that way was invaluable. And of course I spent much of the six years researching the book talking to Bob's friends, family, and the band in order to get an understanding of who he really was. That was an important part of this book for me; to create a real understanding of Bob as a musician and a man.. He was someone who faced a lot of difficult challenges, but also achieved a lot in his all-too-brief 35 years.

One thing I felt you successfully explained was Bob Stinson's departure and how there wasn't a simple answer to the question of "why did he leave the Replacements?"

My sense was that there was almost an inevitability to him not being in the band -- especially as they moved along in their career. What I gathered from his wife and his close friends was that there was actually some relief and not being in the Replacements by the end, because it had become damaging to his soul and psyche.

With the Bob stuff it was important to me to correct some of the misconceptions out there. The whole point of me editorializing anything -- which I tried to do very little of -- in regard to his firing or the "champagne incident" is because people have tended to vilify Paul and Tommy for the way they handled things. My point was that Bob's problems were way bigger than the Replacements. And that the other guys in the band had their own problems and emotional limitations in their ability to deal with the situation. Westerberg can be a contradictory person, but I don't think Paul was as ever malicious as some people like to think when it came to how and why Bob left the band.

Did you get to talk to [original drummer] Chris Mars, either face to face or through the internet?

I started to - I did an interview in 2008 when I wrote a feature on the Replacements for SPIN magazine. But Chris made it clear, along with his wife/manager, that he didn't want to be part of the book. Part of that is probably the same reason he wasn't involved in the 'Mats reunion -- he's moved on in his life and is now a serious, and seriously successful, fine artist. And I don't think he wants to cloud what he's doing now with his Replacements' past. Fortunately, I had several author friends who had long unpublished

interviews with Chris and I draw from those as well as the existing sources and new interviews with those who knew him. I think I managed to make him as vivid a character as anyone else in the book.

I was afraid that like so many music biographies , that this book could spend a large amount of time on the origins but skip over the details of the songs, the recording, and what made each tour unique. Halfway through the book, I said to myself, "Wow, you really did it." Not only had it covered their backgrounds in more detail than I knew existed, but you captured the true soul of the band. All of the famous stunts are there, but not in a tabloid way as in 'look how crazy these guys are!', but successfully explaining 'this is how scared they were that they were going to have to go home and get jobs pushing a broom for the rest of their lives.'

Thank you. Well, the amazing thing about the Replacements, and one of the reasons I think they affected people so deeply and continue to be relevant and resonate with new generations of fans is because they were, for lack of a better term, so real. They were who they were at all times -- in life, in the studio, on stage and off. That's a rare thing in show business, even in rock and roll -- there's always a layer of artifice with most artists and performers. But with the 'Mats so much of who they were and what they were about -- their fears, their insecurities, their humor, their romantic natures, the power of them as people -- came out in their music and their shows. As a result, their individual backstories, their creative lives, the band's professional life, it all bleeds together and are equally important to understand. That's why it's a story of such breadth -- as you read, it becomes clear this book is about much more than just a "wild and crazy" rock band.

In what ways did the book turn out differently than you anticipated?

I suppose it's more serious that I thought it might have been -- the stuff with Bob's life, exploring Paul's drinking, all the family and personal elements are much more pronounced than what I might have expected years ago. At the same time I had a gut sense before I started that if I really dug into this story, that there was going to be a lot of heavy shit just below the surface. In the end, it's a book that's deeply emotional on a lot of levels. Which I'm okay with -- in fact, I'm proud of that, because I think that's the truth of the story. It's a comedy and a tragedy and a triumph. The Replacements were all those things.

Was there anything that was left out of the book due to space or it just didn't fit that you wish could have been kept in?

Oh, God, all kinds of stuff. Believe it or not, as long as it is, the book was originally about 30-40 percent longer. A lot of that was just additional details and anecdotes. Thanks to my editors I was able to keep the essence of the book and the important elements intact. But there was lots of fun little factoids and tangents that got cut. Maybe in the

paperback edition -- if I'm lucky enough to get one -- I will add some of that material as part of the end notes. I think the fans, especially, will dig that stuff.

I have frequently told people that this one of the best music biographies I have ever read, and not because it is about my favorite band. What's your next book?

Got a couple ideas, but nothing concrete yet. After the Replacements I'll have a hard time finding a subject as complex or fascinating, that's for sure.

Bob Mehr has been busy giving numerous other interviews. The best is with **Scott Hudson** on *The Ledge*. Scott's weekly radio show is always worth hearing, but as a Replacements fan, Scott dedicates **an entire 2.5 hour episode** to interviewing Mehr. In addition to no shortage of details about episodes in the book, Mehr plays his personal choice of songs, everything from the Replacements' influences (some obvious like The Faces and Slade, along with some surprises) to discussing the outtakes from the band that didn't make it on the official releases ("Nowhere Is My Home", "Satellite").

Q: When did the idea originate [to write the book]?

A: Interestingly, one of the flashpoints for me, even though it was years before anything was formalized, was in August of 2004 I went up to Minneapolis to interview Paul Westerberg for the now-defunct Harp Magazine. It was my first time interviewing Paul in person. We had done some phone interviews in the past, and it was for the "Folker" record. He was less than a year removed from the passing of his father, and he wasn't doing a lot of press. This was before he was going out on his big full-band tour he did in 2005. He was only doing a handful of interviews, and Harp flew me out. I had an amazing conversation with him, and I suppose on some level I think we connected or things clicked. He was in a really open place. We just talked, and it was a really good interview.

That same day, I had some hours to kill. This was like late summer in Minneapolis, (and) it was beautiful. I called Peter Jespersen on his cell because while he was in L.A. he could tell me what to do in Minneapolis with this time to kill. He happened to be in Minneapolis at that very moment clearing out the old Twin/Tone offices. He said "why don't you come over?" I went over there, and him and Paul Stark, his partner in the label, were literally going through boxes and boxes of stuff. I spent an afternoon there going through all these clippings, receipts, and archives. I was going pouring over stuff as a fan and friend, really, not as research.

So I spent the morning with Westerberg. I spent the afternoon with Peter at the offices going through all this stuff, and I could really see the history of the band in a sense right in front of my eyes. Then I still had a little more time to kill, and I went to the Uptown Bar, now also since defunct. Who was behind the bar but Anita Stinson, Tommy Stinson's mother. So in that day here's Paul, here's the label and the history of the band,

and here's the family side. All in this kind of weird tourist experience, so I have to say the seeds were planted that day. It was probably another three years after that that I first really proposed doing the book; a kind of a written proposal to Paul and Tommy. Then I began meeting with them individually. I met Tommy, who at the time was living in L.A. We had dinner, and he said "I'll do it if Paul does it." I think typically he says that, thinking that it's a way of putting people off because Paul had never agreed to anything. Cut forward a few months later. I was doing a story for Spin Magazine on the Replacements reissues in 2008. I met with Paul at his home. We did the interview for that, and after we were done I turned off the tape recorder and he said "let's talk about the book." In that afternoon, we started talking seriously about what it would entail, and what would be involved and how I wanted to approach it. I got a call from Paul's manager, Darren Hill, a few days later and he said that Paul's in.

Of course, it was another year before I ended up selling the book. I sold the book in 2009, and really have been working on it ever since. Obviously, some of the delay was because in 2013 they reunited and so forth. I thought it would take a couple of years, a year to research and a year to write. It turned out to be six years, but I think it was worth it. It certainly was a more interesting journey for me as a result.

Q: How many times did you talk to Paul and Tommy?

A: With Paul and Tommy what I wanted to do and was important for me with them was to do face to face interviews. I interviewed almost 250 different people for the book, from childhood friends to producers, managers, music collaborators, colleagues, wives, family, that sort of thing. A lot of that I did on the phone, or oftentimes I'd be in New York, L.A., or wherever and do interviews in person there. For Paul and Tommy, it was important for me to go where they were. I just think you get a different effect and a different level of depth when you lock eyes on somebody. For Paul, what I would do typically is interview him once or twice a year. I'd go do all my other interviews and come back with more stuff. The same thing with Tommy. With them, it was multiple interviews over the years, and I'd go back and forth between doing other research and other interviews, and come back to them. It was a continuous process. It wasn't a one-time deal.

(You can read other excerpts at <http://www.argusleader.com/story/blogs/scotthudson/2016/02/27/hudson-long-last-replacements-book-being-published/81029428> and hear the full interview at <http://realpunkradio.com/podcast/theledge/Live230.mp3>.)

You can hear another **interview with Bob Mehr** from the Philadelphia **Dan and Dan show**:

<https://soundcloud.com/ddmusicpodcast/dan-and-dan-music-podcast-episode-27-the-replacements-an-interview-with-biographer-bob-mehr?in=ddmusicpodcast%2Fsets%2Fdan-and-dan-music-podcast-2>

Jeremy Gordon of *Pitchfork* wrote “Why It Took Decades for The Replacements to Get Their Due”:

BM: Paul’s memory is funny. He has an incredible recall for very specific things, both within his own life going back to childhood and within the band’s life, but then there are other very obvious things that he doesn’t remember. Sometimes he would surprise me asking which album came first. Those sorts of things where you’re like “Really? These things that everybody knows?” But generally, Paul has a fantastic memory, which is surprising to me because the blur of touring and the process of being in a band—there’s a lot of redundancy there, so it can all tend to morph and blur together. I was surprised at how vivid his recall was on some things and unclouded by drink or whatever might have been going on.

With Tommy, he was real good on certain stuff, but then there were some things—particularly with the early part of the band, where his role within the band changed. When he started out, he was such a kid. There were some things he wasn’t around for, too, because he was in school, so there were some gaps with him.

Pitchfork: One of the themes of the book is that tension between wanting to be successful rock stars, but also getting in their own way a lot of the time. If they wanted to be successful, why did it seem like they were deliberately getting in their own way?

I think it was partly out of pride. Maybe they were too proud in some instances to do the whole major label, dog and pony show that you had to do then to be successful. Also, it comes down to communication. That wasn’t in their nature—they were a very uncommunicative band among themselves. Paul and Tommy and Bob never really sat down and said, “okay, here’s what we’re doing,” “here’s our one-year plan and our five-year plan,” or “here are the lines that we are willing to cross or not cross.” That conversation just never happened.

Pitchfork: There’s a consistent theme of how Bob’s life was so tumultuous from the beginning of his childhood, and that maybe his trajectory was unavoidable in some ways. He was molested by his mother’s boyfriend, he spent time in a psychiatric institution, he struggled with alcohol and heroin abuse, and none of these problems were ever properly treated. The idea that a relationship with a family member would get so bad that you would have to jettison them is pretty alarming. Is there a world where things could have been worked out with Bob where he could have stayed?

BM: It’s something that I’ve thought about and certainly the band’s thought about. The lesser solution to the Bob “problem” at the time in ‘86 was to actually quit the group and dissolve the Replacements rather than fire Bob. But ultimately, Chris and Tommy wanted to carry on and Paul wanted to carry on and so they had to face the reality of dealing with Bob. I don’t think any of them were necessarily at a place in their own lives

where they were in a position to really see what needed to be done. And quite frankly, Bob's problems were far bigger than anything that had to do with the Replacements. His own addictions and abuses were also the byproduct more of his childhood traumas. So it would have taken people a lot more sophisticated, and a culture that was a lot more understanding, to salvage Bob's position in the Replacements. At that time, under those circumstances, I think it would have been impossible.

Bob clearly wanted something different than the rest of them. Paul and Tommy saw the band as a way out, as a way to being rock stars, to having the sort of freedom in life that those things bring. Bob was way more modest in his aims. He was not entirely comfortable with the trappings of a serious professional music career. Some of that was a bit of a big fish, small pond syndrome. He was much more comfortable in Minneapolis than existing in the major label, New York City kind of environment. I have turned it over in my mind—I don't think there was really any way that Bob could have continued on in the Replacements. I just think the Replacements would have ceased to exist, and they almost did. Tommy basically was faced with that choice—it came down to him saying, "We continue on without my brother or we don't continue on." In effect, he salvaged it. And I don't think anybody can judge him for that.

Pitchfork: In June, Paul suggested that the band was done. Do you think they have a final act?

BM: I certainly hope they do, and I feel like they do. I know how powerful the bond between them. There's all kinds of weird dynamics and complex issues that arise out of having a bond with somebody like that, because they have a personal relationship and this amazing creative chemistry. I think the reunion healed some of the things and made their relationship better, but it also maybe highlighted some of those same complexities. At this moment, they're probably happy to take a break from the idea of the Replacements as a working entity. But at the end of the day, I do feel like what they have is so strong and so special that it's hard to stay away from that forever. Even though it seems like maybe they're in hibernation mode, I still feel like the Replacements are alive and well in spirit, if nothing else.

<http://pitchfork.com/thepitch/1042-why-it-took-decades-for-the-replacements-to-get-their-due>

From an interview by **Jonathan Cohen** with **vice.com**:

Did this band enjoy its success as it was happening? Were they proud of what they were accomplishing? Some of their more wild and appalling behavior, especially in business settings, can make it seem otherwise.

There was a tremendous amount of both insecurity and ego in the mix. That's maybe typical of people who come from alcoholic backgrounds or have it in their makeup. It's also a Minnesotan or Midwestern thing: don't be too big for your britches. But they had a measure of pride and were incredibly competitive with bands like Husker Du and

R.E.M. They gave a fuck. They gave a lot of fucks! It was a surprise how much it meant to them. It wasn't an off-hand thing. In Paul's case, as much as the band was completely genuine, he had an understanding of show business and showmanship. Not so much that he was doing an act on stage, but he understood that the things you do can carry on beyond the life of the band or those songs or that show. He was aware of creating this idea of the band, from the first few months. If you went to a Replacements show on Tuesday, on Wednesday, it was, did you SEE the Replacements, not HEAR the Replacements. In the short term, that may not have been the best for their career. But in the long run, here we are talking about their legacy 30-plus years later and all the moments they created. These weird swings of mood and feeling in their shows were part of that inherent mix of ego and insecurity. They also wanted to leave something behind that would be remembered.

From the time Peter discovered them, it was always an upward trajectory for them. In the States, everything was on an upswing from the first moments. But there was never really any plan. They just fell into this thing that had a strange momentum of its own. When it came to conducting their careers, there wasn't a whole lot of forethought or planning. It was more like, we'll burn that bridge when we get there. There were flashpoint moments. On his own, Paul only had a couple of songs before the Replacements. But once he met the other guys, he quickly wrote 30, 40, 50. Something about the chemistry of the four of them inspired him as a writer and a musician to take the opportunity to make something of himself. He'd been searching for years for that kind of opportunity. Peter was so pivotal because the band was incapable of everything besides playing. They couldn't even drive to their gigs. To me, *Hootenanny* into *Let It Be* is the most crucial time. The first two records were all energy, but the real identity of who they were and who they could be was crystalized on *Let It Be*. They began to show the twin sides of their musical personality.

Could it all have panned out different for the Replacements? Could they have played the game more? Or were they just so true to themselves that they couldn't help it?

They certainly could have done a few things to have been more successful. Maybe it was a question of finding the right producer or mixer to help inch their songs up the chart. But at the end of the day, they weren't ready to do those things in terms of the business side. They just weren't capable of it. And in any case, at that time, it may not have made any difference. They still would have needed MTV and radio support. Nowadays, the path to that kind of career is very different. If they'd have come up at a point where alternative radio had more impact and power, maybe they would have succeeded on a bit of a higher level. As Paul says, they were five years ahead and ten years behind. They could have been the Faces or Mott the Hoople. Or, they could have thrived in the post-Nirvana environment. In the heart of the 80s, it was hard for a band with that sound and attitude to succeed commercially. They were playing a long game, consciously or not. In 2014, they filled a baseball stadium with 14,000 people singing back their songs to them

as generational anthems, which they have absolutely become. In the long run, they won. The victory wasn't in the moment. It was for all time.

The reunion seemed like a microcosm of their original run condensed into less than two years—all the highs, lows, and head-scratching moments in-between. Why did it go sour?

I had written most of the book before the reunion happened, but it was always there lurking in the background. They even made some attempts to rehearse in 2008 because they were starting to get big festival offers around that time. Paul was hesitant of being faced with the legacy and potentially damaging it. As it turned out, the opposite happened. They were as good if not better than they'd ever been. The chemistry between Paul and Tommy, which is so unique, was still there and as powerful as ever. It was a success in that way. It was also important because it came out of a noble cause, which was to get together for Slim. It allowed them a purpose that was bigger than a check. They realized how much they needed each other. They were at a bit of loose ends in their lives. Sometimes you want to go back to familiar and important relationships, and for Paul and Tommy, it was the bond they have. The reunion went on longer than any of them expected, because the demand was so great. They made some attempts to record too. But they're both different people than they were in the Replacements, and it's very hard to revive a band as a real going concern when you aren't in your mid-20s anymore. There are so many other factors. I think they are capable of making another great record. But for the moment, they need to go do their own things, which is what they're doing. A part of me thinks that this thing they have between them and how people relate to it is too special for them to walk away from completely.

<http://noisey.vice.com/blog/bob-mehr-replacements-trouble-boys-interview>

From an interview with **Adam Nayman** for **hazlitt.net**:

Bob Mehr: I saw them before I heard them. I experienced them on Saturday Night Live during their performance in 1986. I didn't really know anything about the band, and I was watching the show because of Anthony Michael Hall, who had been in *Weird Science*. The band came on and from the first moment I realized that there was something different and special about them, the way that they approached the stage and the total disregard they had for the moment. If you watch that performance, you can see it in the way that Paul Westerberg is stalking around the stage and missing lyrical cues. He cursed off-mike at Bob Stinson before the guitar solo: he used the f-word on television. That attitude leapt off the TV screen. I kept that with me for a couple of years until I found the album *Pleased to Meet Me*. At that time, in the late '80s, American rock bands were sort of few and far between. In the '70s, there was more live and rock and roll music on television, for instance. In 1986, that was hard to find. The Replacements

on SNL had volume and raggedness and an element of danger, especially for a twelve-year-old kid. It was a very visceral first exposure.

It's funny that the moment you discovered them is also the performance that the book suggests set them back professionally for several years —and was sort of the beginning of the end of Bob Stinson playing in the band.

It was a great moment if you look back at it as a performance, but the die was cast there. That was their first major label record, and a great opportunity for them to prove their willingness to play the game and they didn't do that. I don't think it was entirely their fault. I tried in the book to provide some context about why the people at Saturday Night Live might have been a little more uptight than usual that night, with Harry Dean Stanton and Sam Kinison in the house, and at a moment when the show's own fate was a bit tenuous. Having such a powder-keg line-up [of guests] that night was very tense.

How did you feel about being entrusted with so much sensitive information about your subjects' lives? Was there ever a moment where you thought about holding back?

I had a general awareness, from instinctiveness and from reading between the lines that these guys, to a man, had come from these troubled environments, and that informed who they were. I think I realized that there was more pre-history to the band. There's always been a bit of a creation myth about The Replacements, that Paul was walking home and he heard this band rehearsing and hid in the bushes listening and then went up and joined them and the magic was born. That's true in the abstract but there was a lot more that led him to that moment. Talking to Paul, I learned a lot more about what came before that, about him kicking around and playing with different groups and quitting high school to commit himself to a life of music, which was a pretty bold thing for a 17-year-old kid without other options, to box himself in for life. In talking to Tommy early on, I came to realize the depth of how unsettled his childhood had been, and his brother's as well. The journey of that family for the first twelve or thirteen years of Bob's life led to him getting lost in the state juvenile system, in rehab and in group homes.

Reading about their various backstories indicates why the band members often thrived on getting negative attention...

Or any attention at all, really. They didn't have a lot of positive reinforcement in their lives, and I think that's why, a little farther down the line, somebody like Peter Jespersen was so important to them beyond the business. For people who'd never had that kind of attention, it was a big thing. It gave them a faith and belief in what they were doing that they wouldn't have had otherwise. Maybe in some ways that was unrealistic, and contributed to the way they behaved later. By their second gig, they had somebody taking care of them and exposing them to the world, which was good in the

short term but in the long term, they were less self-determining than they could have been.

How did you sort through the different, conflicting anecdotes and determine what actually happened?

I tried to triangulate the truth whenever possible, and to get multiple perspectives on everything. I wanted to see where people agreed and where they differed and to create an objective reality out of that. In some cases, things were more subjective and about perception, whether it was feelings or relationships, and that's always a hard thing to determine. It's in the eye of the beholder. When it comes to incidents, that's always a problem in rock biographies, because as you say, things tend to blur. Tours and shows and vans and dressing rooms...all that stuff. Paul and Tommy had vivid recall about some stuff, and were cloudy on other things. That's why I did so many interviews. Some of it was also verifiable just via audio recordings of their shows. I didn't want to just rely on what Paul and Tommy said in 2010 or 2011, but also what they said in 1985 and 1986.

It's interesting that you open the book by focusing on Bob Stinson instead of Paul Westerberg...

That was a choice that I had to make. At one point, I was going to start the book with Paul circa 1996, coming off of his last major-label tour at the end of his contract and at a really low ebb in his solo career. He thought he had failed at that part of his life and his dream to be a rock and roller was over. He described it like an athlete at the end of his career, wondering what to do next. He said that he'd achieved his dream, and it wasn't as successful as he'd wanted it to be, and that he didn't have another dream, and that was terrifying to him. I think it almost plunged him into a depressive state. I thought about starting there. But that moment, as profound as it was for Paul, wasn't the most profound moment for The Replacements. That, for me, was Bob Stinson's passing. That's the thread that goes through the book. Bob's tragedies were the foundation of the band—how he took what happened to him as a child and used music to reconnect with the world, and for him and his brother to escape their past. Bob was this spectral presence in the group even when he wasn't in the band anymore. I felt like starting with anything else was a cop out, even if it was a risk to open on a funeral and then get more depressing from there. It wasn't done for shock value; it was because that was the story.

As a fan, would you stick up for the later albums after Bob Stinson left? A lot of critics think they lost something essential; I know that Robert Christgau hates the song "Achin' to Be," for instance.

I stick up for that stuff as a fan and from a historical perspective. That song in particular is perhaps the most autobiographical thing Paul ever wrote, and one of the most genuine. He does change the gender of the protagonist, but the song is about him. It's also possibly about Chris Mars, or about Paul's sister. The fact that it sounds softer or a

bit more country and that people perceived that as a sell out is totally wrong headed. When Paul hired Slim Dunlap to replace Bob Stinson, it was a point when they were at their wildest, performance-wise, with a lot of loud, raucous songs, it was because Slim was a blues player—a roots player. Paul wanted to take his music in that direction. It was a genuine artistic impulse, and didn't have much to do with being commercial. "Aching to Be" wasn't the right single to follow "I'll Be You," which was more of an attempt to do a pop record. "Achin' to Be" torpedoed the record in a way. And yet it was a great song. By the end, a lot of the songs that Paul liked best weren't the best songs for the band, or for his career.

<http://hazlitt.net/feature/men-out-time-interview-bob-mehr>

Geoff Edgers from *The Washington Post*:

The first set of formal interviews we did for the book and after the first day, he was, by the end, when I went to sort of get together with him the next time it was very strained and awkward. He pulled out a letter he had written me and sat me down in his basement, in his studio and read me this letter where he had taken some shots at me. 'What are you trying to do here. You're trying to make me a villain.' When it was over and he had read this whole thing, he just sort of sighed and slumped and said, 'oh, I got that out of my system. What do you want to drink?' I think he thought I had come with some agenda and he was uncomfortable with the process of reflecting on his life in a way he hadn't done. He joked to me after that first interview that he was going to do this whole theatrical bit where he was going to have a buddy come in with a suit and read me the riot act and throw me out of the house. But it was in the middle of a blizzard and he said it was too cold for theater. The other part was when the book was done and he decided he wanted to read it. I didn't think he wanted to read it. But he changed his mind and I sent it to him. And again, kind of the same thing.

What in particular did he take issue with?

I think he felt like his relationship with Bob, that there were more laughs. It was more a friendship than it was portrayed. I think I portrayed that. Their relationship was one of mutual need. Musically they weren't always a match. Temperamentally, they weren't always a match. But I think what Paul came to recognize and realize in Bob was a fearlessness and that was kind of the Replacements's rallying cry. Maybe he wanted to talk more about how they played their guitars more. Talk about the musicianship per se. But it's not Goffin and King. The Replacements writing was very visceral and about the moment and the dynamics of the band. To understand the songs, you have to understand the characters and individuals involved.

But you know, everybody's a book critic, including Paul Westerberg. I'll be honest. I Fedexed him the book on a Saturday morning and then 3 am my phone rings. And of course, his call comes up unknown and I'm like I bet I know who that is. But we talked it

out and I laid out the reasons I did what I did. He expressed his feelings about it and I think in the end, everything was fine.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/arts-and-entertainment/wp/2016/02/11/he-wrote-the-definitive-bio-of-the-replacements-and-got-paul-westerbergs-tooth>

Craig Rosen from *Yahoo! Music*:

Mehr says he understood Westerberg's concerns. "I can't imagine what it would feel like if a 500-page book detailing my life showed up on the doorstep, and if I read through it I'm sure it would be a mind-altering experience and not an entirely pleasant one," he says. "So I think his initial reaction was sort of more about that and experiencing that so viscerally. I think at the end of the day, everyone is OK with what it is, because it's the truth. I think they realize I made a very serious attempt to tell their story. And if nothing else, they appreciate that."

The band's 2013 reunion occurred while Mehr was nearly finished with the book, and it provided a nice closer to the band's story. "There were some amazing things about the reunion," Mehr says. "I think they really experienced a sense of validation in terms of coming to grips with the legacy of this thing they created and seeing how deep it touched people. How could you not, when you're onstage in New York City and there's 14,000 people singing your songs back to you as anthems? That's what they had become."

<https://www.yahoo.com/music/trouble-boys-digs-deep-to-tell-the-true-story-of-164449811.html>

Oscar Rickett from *Vice*:

"In the end I think the bigger goal, the goal they actually achieved, was to be remembered. I once read Civil War author Allan Gurganus describe the idea of the romantic 'lost cause'. He said it's about attempting the impossible at great cost, proudly celebrating the failure and gaining admiration for the performance. In a weird way, I think that holds true for the Replacements as well."

http://www.vice.com/en_uk/read/a-love-letter-to-the-replacements-747

If you want a signed copy of *Trouble Boys*, you can get one here:

If anyone wants signed, personally inscribed copies of "Trouble Boys: The True Story of the Replacements" you can order them direct from The Booksellers at Laurelwood in Memphis - a fine indie store in my hometown, who've generously offered to facilitate this for those who want 'em signed for themselves or as gifts. All you need to do is call Macon Wilson at The Booksellers at Laurelwood at (901) 410-5175. You can put in your

order with her (or leave a voicemail if she's not there). She'll process it, find out what you'd like inscribed and I will sign them and they'll be sent out within days.

You can find a schedule of Bob Mehr's latest appearances about Trouble Boys at his Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/bob.mehr>

The Replacements Fan Questionnaire, completed by Bob Mehr and Peter Jesperson (Interviewed by Simon Wright)

Favourite LP

Mehr "I'll go with Tim – it was the record that hit me hardest during my teen years, and which remains closest to my heart (and contains some of Westerberg's finest songs). Though I have soft spot for the sheer musical and stylistic abandon of Hootenanny as well."

Jesperson "My favourite Mats LP is Let It Be, though I love all of the first four, from top to bottom"

Favourite Gig

Mehr "The first reunion show in Toronto. Having, at that point, been working on the book for several years, to suddenly be whisked to Canada, and be standing side stage as the band came back to life before my very eyes was a truly surreal and remarkable experience."

Jesperson "So hard to pick a favourite gig, I saw them play hundreds of times, there were so many phenomenal ones ... on the nights they did the brilliant shows they were capable of, I didn't think it possible there was a better rock & roll band on the planet at that moment. A couple of shows that stand out to me are – one, in 1982, the Mats were opening for the premier Twin/Tone band of the day, The Suburbs, at my old high school. I was standing with one of my former English teachers and the school principal when the band walked onstage and opened with "Fuck School." I don't know why I didn't see that coming, it seems so obvious now but, it caught me completely off-guard. We all, my then-present company included, had a good laugh! Another gig that sticks in my mind was the show they did at Irving Plaza in NYC in December of 1984. That was the week the band was on the cover of the Village Voice and just days after they got shit-faced drunk and did one of their all-cover-songs sets in front of many of the city's A&R community at what was supposed to have been an "unannounced" gig at CBGB (they played under a pseudonym – Gary & The Boners). They came out on stage at Irving Plaza like they had something to prove and opened with a blazing version of the Kiss song "Rock and Roll All Nite." I happened to be up in the balcony VIP section when they came on and it was hilarious to see the expressions on everyone's faces there – a

number of them clearly thought at first that the band was making fun of the song. But they played it straight and delivered a balls-to-the-wall version that was, no matter how you looked at it, undeniably great rock and roll. And they kept it up for the whole set – it was one of the best I ever saw them do.

Favourite Incident That Turned Out To Be Untrue

Mehr “During the making of All Shook Down, the Replacements’ were staying at the Hyatt House on Sunset. Another guest there was the King (and Queen) of rock and roll, Little Richard. He kept a permanent residence, two suites in fact, at the hotel that happened to be on either side of Paul Westerberg’s room. One story that made the rounds suggested a rather close encounter between Little Richard and Tommy Stinson. As the tale went, Stinson came to Westerberg’s room one night, in a messy state, demanding more of whatever they’d ingested earlier in the evening. It turned out he was pounding on the wrong door, when it opened to reveal Little Richard in a silk kimono. The flamboyant Richard looked Tommy up and down and exclaimed “Well, hell-o room service. Come on in!” Stinson was frozen. He had not been prepared to meet a giant bi-sexual rock legend in full readiness at the Riot House, and made haste back to his room. Alas, this story – related by several people, most colorfully by the Georgia Satellites’ Dan Baird – proved to be apocryphal. As far as Stinson could remember the only encounters he had with Little Richard were in the lobby of the hotel, where they chatted and he got him to sign an autograph.”

Favourite Story That Turned Out To Be True

Mehr “Too many to count. That’s the funny thing with the Replacements – most of the famous stories one would totally assume were embellished, exaggerated or apocryphal, turned out to be absolutely true.”

Jesperperson “There are just so many it’s hard to choose just one ... but the time very early on when Longhorn owner Hartley Frank pulled us all outside of the bar to try to convince the band that the gig he was offering them on short notice for little money and with no time to promote it was a good idea. I opposed it, the band trusted me and effectively told Hartley that, from then on, he had to talk to me when he wanted to book the band ... it was funny and it was one of the first great moments of solidarity between the band and I.”

What would have happened if Rod Stewart had recorded Sixteen Blue?

Jesperperson “Geez, the mind reels. It could have been great, in terms of validation and made other people take them more seriously. But it also could have been detrimental –

a large influx of money to them in 1984, especially since the largest portion would've gone to Paul as the only writer on that song, may have driven a wedge between them. "

There is still good unreleased Twin Tone material, both studio and live - would you ever put it out ?

Jesperson "I don't think there is much good unreleased Twin/Tone material any more. We used the good stuff on the reissues we did for Rhino in 2008. Though we suspect that Paul has a lot of unreleased home recordings and there could be some real gems there. It's just taken a while to get around to putting out unreleased Replacements recordings of any kind, partially because there wasn't a huge demand and partially because live tapes and bootlegs have circulated for years so the real fans already have a lot of it. But I think there will be some cool archival Replacements releases in the years to come."

<https://onlyrockandroll.london/2016/03/24/trouble-boys-mehr-and-jesperson-discuss/>

THE I DON'T CARES: WILD STAB



After the end of the Replacements reunion, Paul Westerberg returned to the US and finished recording his first album (in any format) in 7 years.

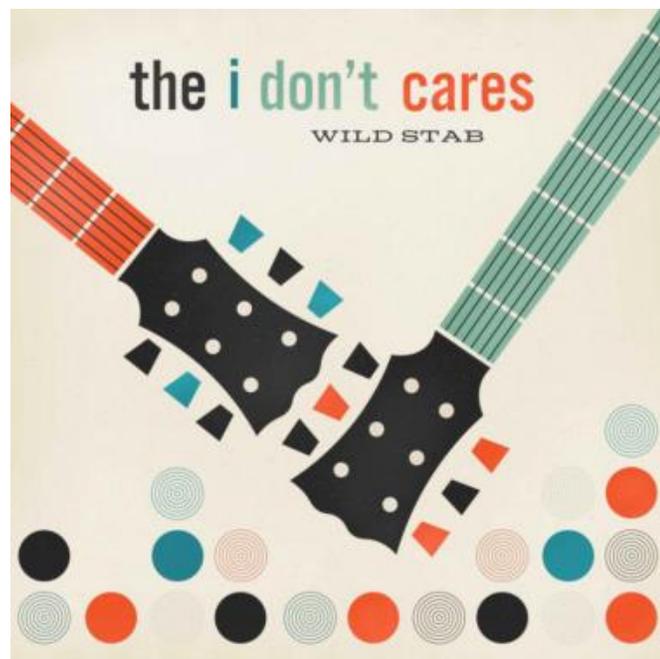
He paired up with Juliana Hatfield, former singer and bass player of Boston band the Blake Babies, and together they released an album in January 2016 under **The I Don't Cares** called *Wild Stab*.

You can read the lyrics to the album posted by **Kathy Shine** of the *Paul Westerberg Page* at <http://www.paulwesterberg.com/lyrics/wild-stab-lyrics>

In the words of *NPR's Ken Tucker*:

The I Don't Cares come along at a time when Westerberg has finished up a reunion tour with his career-making band, The Replacements. And this new album feels, in part, like a winding down, a tension release from the burden of having to make good on the demands of longtime fan loyalty. It sounds to me as though Westerberg and Hatfield sought the refuge of The I Don't Cares to relax while also being productive. The result is music that's never a stab in the back but a stab to the heart. And the hurt feels awfully good.

<http://www.npr.org/2016/02/15/466431070/westerberg-and-hatfield-aim-for-the-heart-with-wild-stab>



Josh Neas of *Aquarium Drunkard*:

...soon after the 'Mats said they were going away again, Instagram photos of Westerberg and Juliana Hatfield started popping up, and soon it was official – there would be a record called *Wild Stab* under the banner of the I Don't Cares – the band with a name designed to literally lower expectations. And when the first song off the record was a seeming throw away track called “1/2 2P” – a song about finding an irresistible urge to urinate come over you whenever a certain someone was around – well, my expectations went even lower.

It's always the game that's been played. Some of (but not all of) Westerberg's finest solo moments have come when the stakes were low. Disappearing for four years after getting dropped from Capitol? Quietly slide a record under your nom de plume Grandpaboy into record stores (*Mono*) and then follow it up with a companion album that contains some of the best songwriting of your career (*Stereo*). Nearly ruin your guitar hand allegedly stabbing it with a screwdriver while cleaning wax from a candle? Drop a surprise album that is one track and 40 some minutes in length – and again maybe one of the best albums you've ever done – on to the internet with no fanfare (the aforementioned *49:00*). And then follow that up with four more similarly released EPs over the next year that all contain seriously solid material. You start to get the picture.

So – how does *Wild Stab* (more lowered expectations) hold up? It's actually fantastic. From what has been said in interviews, Hatfield was allowed a look through Westerberg's demos that had gone unreleased (mostly) and allowed to pick what she thought sounded worth tackling. The results are a record that sound a lot like this recent excellent period of Westerberg's songwriting. Opener “Back” strikes a perfect balance between the two halves of *Stereo* and *Mono* – the reflective and lightly punchy lyricism of the former and the minimal and driving full-band sound of the latter. “Wear Me Out Loud” becomes the first of a great handful of rockers that sound like they could've emerged out of the Rockpile school of songwriting – “Love Out Loud” being the best example of this.

<http://www.aquariumdrunkard.com/2016/01/27/the-i-dont-cares-wild-stab-paul-westerberg-juliana-hatfield>

Adam Kivel of *Consequence of Sound*:

“I'm back if you'll have me,” Westerberg sings on the opening track, a treatise for the album's openhearted return. Later, on “King of America”, the former Mats frontman describes a working-class past, only to insist that now is his time to become royalty. Sure, it's tongue-in-cheek, and the saccharine harmonies jar cheekily against a gruff guitar solo, but there's something sweet in picturing Westerberg on a throne (likely one made of baseball bats).

Longtime Westerberg fans will recognize some punchy revision: The giddy love song “Born for Me” is a particular highlight, gritty and fun like Wilco's latest. While pleasant

in its original acoustic rendition, here it's a thrilling fist-pumper. "I could die here with you," they harmonize, and you can hear just how wide their grin stretches. That same smirk is audible in "Done Done Done", the two urging you to "whoop it in, whoop it out," and other fun syllable work.

Though they might be the I Don't Cares, and most of their songs sound tossed-off, a part of Westerberg and Hatfield takes this at least a little seriously, as evidenced by closer "Hands Together". The track is a charming bit of alt rock balladry, Westerberg unspooling lines about Ty Cobb's funeral and the blankets in his bedroom. You don't just throw away tracks as sweet as these; you care about them. If the two continue their partnership, a little more careful planning could result in a masterpiece.

<http://consequenceofsound.net/2016/01/album-review-the-i-dont-cares-wild-stab>

Andy Derer of *Empty Lighthouse Magazine*:

Wild Stab, the new full length album, certainly feels like a Paul solo album with Juliana only taking lead vocals for a few of the songs. Paul's songwriting style is so singular that it almost feels like we have heard this material before. In fact, a few of the songs appeared as different versions on previous Westerberg solo albums, but the versions here hit harder, louder and looser than anything Paul has attempted since his mid-80s hot streak.

The album is lean and sexy with a one-take late-night vibe (described as "Donny & Marie with switchblades" in the liner notes) anchoring new rippers like "Wear Me Out Loud," "Dance To The Fight" and "Done Done Done." The rustic cow-punk sound of the Los Angeles band X seems to be an influence here with the male and female voices melding to create one tough vocal. "King Of America" would have been a huge hit in 1993, with Westerberg describing "I've cleaned your floors, scrubbed your toilets," and now it's his turn to be the "King of America." A booming, anthemic production makes it really pop. In typical Paul Westerberg fashion he buries "King Of America" as the 12th track on Wild Stab. Maybe **The I Don't Cares** really don't care. It's a great album nonetheless and a sweet return to form from one of America's most overlooked songwriters.

<http://emptylighthouse.com/album-review-i-dont-cares-wild-stab-1600919939>

Craig Wright of *the Daily Emerald*:

For once in his career, Westerberg is fully admitting he feels trapped and alone, and it feels like a clear window into his soul. Usually, he disguises his feelings through the veiled perspective of a character, but this is Westerberg narrating from an unfiltered

perspective, likely still reeling from his 2014 divorce. The song is an illustration of loneliness and despair, and the results are devastating.

<http://www.dailymerald.com/2016/01/30/review-the-i-dont-cares-wild-stab-finds-westerberg-and-hatfield-at-their-best-and-everywhere-in-between>

Jonathan Bernstein of *Rolling Stone* (3 ½ stars):

Wild Stab chugs along pleasantly enough until "Hands Together," the 7-minute, album-closing showstopper that serves as a devastating sequel of sorts to 1985's "Here Comes a Regular." "Dreams I had before are now too bored to even show up," Westerberg sings in his scraggly mumble, proving that he can still pull off weary resignation better than anyone.

<http://www.rollingstone.com/music/albumreviews/the-i-dont-cares-wild-stab-20160129#ixzz41qJht6Gh>

The band had a contest for **fan-submitted videos**. You can see the winners at:

- "Love Out Loud" (video by Alex Rosas):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4geuUkZzzig>
- "Kissing Break" (video by anonymous):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oeNQoecPvxo>
- "Back" (video by Helen Frank):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rxM3tfFqChE>
- "Outta My System" (video by Max Tullio):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=25PBur6Mtz4>



And **Paul Westerberg** (as "**Dale Westerberg**") put out his own video for "Whole Lotta Nothin'":

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ind_U_Gf7tU

And since then, a video has surfaced from **Josh Freese's GoPro** of him with **Paul Westerberg** and **Juliana Hatfield** practicing "Done Done Done".

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=51mjsxOa-40&hd=1>

Hopefully there will be shows and even a tour, although nothing has been announced yet. An interview with **Drew Fortune** in *Spin* from March 7 says **Westerberg is working on more songs**

(including “a rollicking, soon-to-be released I Don’t Cares tune” called “Sad Go Round”). The interview has why he’s an internet-phobe and **his thoughts about each of his solo releases:**

The house phone rings and Paul lets it go to voice message. He doesn’t pick up the phone a lot. In addition to his lack of a driver’s license, he doesn’t have an email. “The Internet’s not good for me,” he says. “For anyone with an obsessive-compulsive nature like me, there’s too many rabbit holes. I’m better off if I get up and ride my bike early in the morning, even if it’s just to buy a coffee and a smoke.”

14 Songs (1993): “Overly written songs with huge expectations.”

Eventually (1996): “These Are The Days” should have been a hit.”

Suicaine Gratification (1999): “I think my best. The saddest and the best.”

Stereo/Mono (2002): “A lot of songs to digest. I couldn’t reproduce it if you put a gun to my head. I did so many weird, wrong things, and ran the mixes through amps and s**t. I had no idea what I was doing but it turned out really good. ‘Let’s Not Belong Together’ is a great lost song.”

Come Feel Me Tremble (2003) “I can’t even think what’s on it. Is that the one with ‘Soldier of Misfortune’ and that s**t? ‘My Daydream’ is a good song.”

Folker (2004): “Every one of these records makes me think of someone. I thought ‘Jingle’ was kinda good. I can’t remember any of the other songs because they’re s**t. I’ve learned that there’s a reason you don’t remember the ones you’ve forgotten.”

Open Season OST (2006): “Money. I had to pay the f**king rent on the house. People think I’m rich but I owe more money than anybody realizes. You take Hollywood’s money and you eat Hollywood’s s**t. They ain’t called me back since.”

49:00 (2008): “If I drop dead tomorrow, that’s my masterpiece. I’m so tempted to [make a record like that one] again, but I can’t go through it again. It was absolute insanity and I was so frightened when I made it that people would think I was schizophrenic.”

<http://www.spin.com/2016/03/paul-westerberg-i-dont-cares-replacements-interview>

Westerberg was interviewed by **Peter Wolf** of the J. Giles Band in a **video interview** for *Vanyaland* that’s longer than the album itself. It feels more like you’re hearing two old friends talk. (You can almost smell the coffee and cigarettes.)

<http://www.vanyaland.com/2016/01/22/vanyaland-exclusive-paul-westerberg-and-peter-wolf-discuss-the-i-dont-cares-debut-record>

MEMORIES OF THE BAND

Todd Schneider:

My first Replacements show... well sort of. Me and some buddies went to try and sneak into the 21+ show when we were 17 and we all had tickets and fake ID's. They all got in, but I was a drunken wreck and the doorman wouldn't let me in. Didn't help I started hurling profanity at him.

Later, my friend started hanging with Slim at the bar and told him that the biggest Mats fan he knew was stuck outside. Slim actually came outside to bring me in, but my dumbass was wandering drunkenly up and down Lansdowne St. My friend came out later and told me I was on the guest list, but due to my already established relationship with the doorman, they wouldn't even look at the list.

It was at this point I just sat down and wallowed in my misery until this girl showed up and sat next to me. I knew her from school. She was a grade ahead of me. She always seemed really cool and I was intimidated by her. We talked for a while about music, life and BS. Finally she decided to head home.

I went to the door one last time and the doorman looks at the list and says go ahead. I run down the hallway and I can hear the band tearing up the place with 'Alex Chilton'. My mind was blown as I come around the corner and see them and they hit the closing chords and that is it, it is over.

The next day the girl showed up at my work. I was surprised and intimidated again. She said she just wanted to check up on me because I guess my state was a little concerning. We chatted a little bit and said we should talk more. We chatted once or twice over the years but I wish I had tried to engage her more because I can't believe she is now in a band with Paul Westerberg. You guessed it. It was Juliana Hatfield.

Chris Coleman posted on the **Paul Westerberg & The Replacements** Facebook group:

It's 1985 and I'm very much into the Replacements. I had been in touch with Twin Tone Records and become friendly (by post - I am in the UK) with [SIGNIFICANCE] Lori Bizer.

She'd got copies of issues 2 and 3 of my fanzine "What A Nice Way To Turn Seventeen". Issue number 3 had included a compilation where she'd discovered the Rag Dolls (Dave Kusworth) and The Jacobites (Nikki Sudden and Dave Kusworth), both of whom had tracks on the album and which she constantly played to the extent, as she put it, that "Paul has become quite an admirer of this Kusworth fellow". (This led indirectly to the "Boink!" Album being on Glass Records, which was the Jacobites' label in the UK, and the Jacobites' album "The Ragged School" being released on Twin Tone. Indeed, Paul admitted The Jacobites first album influenced his song-writing on "Tim".)

Anyway, I asked Paul and Lori if The Replacements would let me have a track for the next compilation, and Paul agreed to let me have a solo track. This needed to be kept low profile as they weren't sure how their new record company Sire would feel about it. One of Lori's letters confirms Paul had written a track "specifically for issue 4". The song he'd written was called "Pour Little Kim". As you might imagine, excitement levels were high! I couldn't wait to hear it.

I never did. Alas, pressures on Paul to come up with songs for "Tim" and beyond meant he couldn't ultimately spare the song for WANWTTS. Just for a while there though...



What the alley from the cover of Boink! looks like today

Jim Neilson:

[Once I] was able to turn one of my music obsessed buddies onto them. Went to an informal reunion the day after buying *Pleased to Meet Me* on cassette. Got a little drunk, buddy says "grab some beers, let's drive around and listen to the new album." It was late afternoon, he drove, we listened, we drank, we smoked and we kept listening over and over. We started out in Danbury, CT and we still cannot figure out how we crossed over the Brooklyn Bridge.

Keegan James:

My friend and I drove from Michigan to New York City to see The Replacements. We were just two 20-nothings trying to see our favorite band, we drove all night and all day to get there. We made it through the grime and guts till finally we walked into Forrest Hills Stadium, and suddenly we were in a place where time did not exist. People shifted around the coliseum like some collective being, all there for the same reason. I've never

felt like I fit in, not in school, not in work, but I felt like I was home there. People just hanging out before the show, having a drink, sharing a cigarette, smoking a spliff by the stairs. It was something beautiful. As the show powered on, from my seat in the way back, I saw my fellow fans holding each other, jumping and singing, laughing and crying. I still remember their faces. I looked around the stadium, I looked up at the night sky, no other part of the world was real that night. I understood it all, I understood what this band means to me, to all of you. I still can't even believe I got to see them. The Replacements are in my blood and forever they will stay. God bless you boys, you bastards!

Ivan Gonzalez:

My brother and Lenin I spent the summer gutting fish in Alaska. The plant manager let us take turns choosing music to play. Every time we put on 'Hootenanny' or 'Let It Be,' there'd be groans and stares our way.

This went on for weeks, until a coworker standing next to me said, "You know, this sh!t's actually not that bad."

Patrick O'Neill:

I'm on a message group that asked for the one album that brings you back to the place and time that you were listening to it when you hear it, mine was *Tim*.

I made a cassette copy of *Tim* from the radio station I worked at, brought it back to my apartment and kept playing it for anyone who would listen to it to try to get their reaction because I thought it was one of the greatest things I had ever heard. I remember one girl saying "you're finally getting into the Replacements now? I guess I thought you were cooler than you really were." That was totally devastating because she was the mysterious, trouble making type of girl that people make movies and write books about. The next year we had a party and she showed up. I had procured a duped copy of *The Shit Hits The Fans*, played side 1 during the party and made out with her. Later that night, I found out that she had a serious boyfriend at Northwestern and that I wasn't the first guy to get lured into her web. It was still one of the most awesome nights of my life at that time regardless.

Jeff Rosenzweig:

These boys created some memories for me I can no longer remember.

If you think you have regrets in this life, then read this story by **Ricki C.**:

I have very few rock & roll regrets in this life: one of them is turning down a job writing for England's New Musical Express in 1978; the other, perhaps bigger, regret is not being smart enough or strong enough to become a roadie for The Replacements in 1984.

<http://pencilstorm.com/blog/2014/9/9/ricki-c-turns-down-a-roadie-job-with-the-replacements>

His story verifies the **war-torn state of the Replacements' tour vans** (from "Eight Really Dumb Things the Replacements Did" by Chris Mars from *Rolling Stone*):

The Winnebago: Around 1986, we were traveling through Canada in a rented deluxe Winnebago with a porta-toilet, a little kitchen, and the whole nine yards. The trouble started with someone bringing a gallon can of white paint aboard. Inevitably, on the ten-hour-plus drives between Canadian provinces, boredom and road fatigue set in. We snapped. The paint ended up all over the walls. From that point on, it was straight downhill. Our roadie, Bill Sullivan, had the unfortunate position of driving, while the band members became a four man wrecking team, kicking down all the walls and pretty much gutting the vehicle in less than fifty miles. There was nothing left but a pile of rubble in the back. Somebody succeeded in booting out the side and back windows, allowing the cold Canadian air to rush in. The Winnebago immediately became a wobbly shell of its former self, especially around turns. Even the passenger seat was ripped out. The only thing remaining were Bill Sullivan sitting in the driver's seat and the front windshield (on which there was also an attempt made, which luckily failed). For the remainder of the tour, the rubble heap became a piss mound and refuge for beer bottles and other assorted garbage that - even with the radical ventilation - stunk. By the time we made our way back to the United States, the Winnebago had been in this state for a good couple of weeks (the paint still hadn't dried, thanks to the chilly conditions inside the vehicle). I remember the border patrol guy walking up to the Winnebago in his nice, freshly pressed uniform and police coat. He made us all go into the holding tank, and then proceeded to inspect the vehicle (for fruit or whatever, I guess). When he emerged a little while later, his face was crimson, obviously struggling to hold back his anger. He hadn't found any fruit, but he had paint all over his coat and piss on his shoes and he was pretty much speechless. He then left the room to gather himself, returning a while later to tell us to get the hell back to the United States and never set foot in Canada again. We then, of course, had to return the Winnebago to the rental place, but that's a whole other story. It ended up at about \$5,000 or \$6,000 worth of damage.

One of the ten best Replacements shows to see would've been **the rent party that you can hear at the beginning of *Stink***. **Jay Gabler** of *The Current* did some investigative journalism and found people who were there to get the full story. (And the story confirms it was likely Dave Pirner of Soul Asylum who politely replies to the cop who tells everyone the party is over.)

“Actually, I was kind of grateful that it was busted because we were running out of beer! Their excuse for busting the party [was] that we had complaints from the neighbors. This is the Warehouse District — what neighbors? The ones across the street, they were here! I don’t think they were complaining about the party. But [the police] busted us; they gave a couple of different reasons, but basically because we were selling alcohol.”

“There are people who think that was staged,” said Jespersen. “but of course it wasn’t staged at all. It was very real — that’s exactly what happened.”

<http://blog.thecurrent.org/2016/01/the-replacements-stink-show-a-true-story-from-minnesota-music-history>

Rick McGuiness has some **photos of the Replacements from “April 6, 1986**, at the Concert Hall (aka The Masonic Temple) on Yonge Street, when the band were in town touring to support *Tim.*” <http://someoldpicturesitook.blogspot.com.es/2014/09/replacements.html>

Brian Barber has some **previously unpublished photos of the Replacements** playing in **Lincoln, Nebraska around 1986**. <http://www.brianbarber.com/the-replacements-lincoln-ne-about-1986>

The Washington Post also published some **never seen photos** from all eras of the band. https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/see-these-never-before-published-photos-of-the-late-great-replacements/2016/02/11/92616de8-cf7c-11e5-88cd-753e80cd29ad_gallery.html

The Replacements never had any official tour shirts prior to the 1989 tour. Fans had started to make their own, such as the “Live And Drunk” shirt that appeared around 1987. **Manning Peterson’s** Twitter account has a picture of a hilarious **Replacements t-shirt that was made by Paul Westerberg’s sister**: <https://twitter.com/mrspete/status/700906959776538624>



THE SONGS, THE ALBUMS, AND THE TOURS

Julie Penner (violinist for the Canadian indie band Broken Social Scene) put together an article for hazlitt.net where twelve musicians and authors wrote **what Replacements songs have meant to them**.

Shehzaad Jiwani (frontman for Toronto band, Greys): Paying tribute to a musical hero in a song is a wonderful thing: it tells you where the artist is coming from, and how they envision themselves—or rather, an ideal version of themselves. For Westerberg to pay tribute to Alex Chilton of Big Star—a guy who had a few shots at success and missed, gloriously—tells you a lot about how the ‘Mats frontman saw his own band in 1987. He knew they were great, sure, and hearing the glossy production on *Pleased To Meet Mein* retrospect, you get the impression he wanted to go for broke that time around... though you also get a sense that he knew it was destined to fail. Did he see himself as his generation’s Chilton—a guy who would write some of the best songs of the decade, only to be discovered by younger artists who would become far more successful than he ever would be? Or was he simply imagining the crestfallen frontman wandering the streets of his hometown where they recorded this album, hangin’ down in Memphis all the while?

Chandler Levack (writer from Toronto): There is a special class for songs you need when you have a crush on someone. When you’re freaking out and dry heaving over the perfect spiral in a lock of hair, the glint of green in someone’s eye, the way they pronounce “baby carrots,” “Bent Out Of Shape” is your spirit guide. Once I listened to this song fifty times in a row and it got better. It’s a song about someone treating you like shit, but learning to love the process. “I smell your hair/the clothes I wear/I miss your face,” sings Westerberg. People turn us into old wire coat hangers, spiky and sharp and useless. I’ve been bent out of shape for years now. The Replacements suggest there’s a place for all us wiry, unloved losers—and maybe even a sense of romance and purpose to all that longing. The Replacements make music for people like me because like all great bands, they are those people too. I’m glad I have this song in my arsenal.

<http://hazlitt.net/feature/im-love-song-our-favorites-replacements>

Justin Gerber of *Consequence of Sound*’s **review of *Let It Be*** says all the things that we all would say, after hearing this album hundreds of times. But **the finale about a farewell to the band and the reason for the reunion is touching**.

<http://consequenceofsound.net/video/masterpiece-reviews-the-replacements-let-it-be>

Debby Miller's review of *Let It Be* in *Rolling Stone*, published on Valentine's Day 1986 – five months after the album's release - shows that the album's breakthrough was recognized nationally:

This is a brilliant rock & roll album: as loose as it is deliberate, as pretty as it is hard rocking and as pissed off at all the right things ("Seen Your Video," "Androgynous") as it is hilarious ("Gary's Got a Boner"). Of course, he's not the first rocker who wanted satisfaction and couldn't get any, but in an age when most rock records are studied and wimpy, this rugged album feels truly fresh.

<http://www.rollingstone.com/music/albumreviews/let-it-be-19850214>

Jonathan Donahue of Mercury Rev looks back on what it was like when *Let It Be* came out:

Like The Chameleons, they should be playing stadiums, or should've at their time. This album is one of the standards of great American music. Some of the songs here are up there with some Frank Sinatra tracks, some Bing Crosby moments. Like 'Unsatisfied', for instance, that's a pop standard worthy of Billie Holiday. Again, they couldn't seem to get out of their own way for a period of time. The thing with The Replacements is if you ask Wayne Coyne, Michael Stipe or J Mascis, they were the ones that would say: "The Replacements, that would be the band to be in." They were everybody's band before they made their own band. They almost would have been what The Velvet Underground was at the time for the bands around them.

They also had that catalysing effect of being crazy - they had a nonchalance that most could only dream of. At times they had a recklessness, which put them a few steps behind where they should've been, but that was The Replacements. And it was the first time that the bands we loved actually made a real record. Their songs were going to stand the test of time, songs that we were all going to cover. I know it was like that being around a lot of the bands during the mid-'80s. They had that magnetism Sonic Youth had, but had songs we could all cover, sing and play. Now you hear stories of them playing to 200 people at Coachella and you can't believe how it didn't translate to the younger generation.

<http://thequietus.com/articles/19068-mercury-rev-jonathan-donahue-favourite-albums-interview?page=13>



photo: Wayne Valdez

Chris Morris's review of several of the band's West Coast shows from the April 19, 1985 issue of the *Los Angeles Reader* shows both sides of the band's reputation:

This gnarly yet somehow lovable, even admirable, attitude was on display at the 'Mats' Palace show, which quickly turned into a parody of the showcase it was supposed to be. The Replacements, who had hitherto played local dates in such small joints as Al's or the Cathay, appeared wryly aware of the "prestige" nature of the show. They appeared on stage in matching "uniforms" – baby-blue pajama tops and white chinos. Their road manager Bill wore a three-piece polyester suit on stage. With scarcely a blink, the Twin Cities quartet transformed what was supposed to be a big local break into an exercise in abject chaos.

The Times write-up of the concert was somewhat unfair to the band: They actually performed as many originals as covers at the Palace. On their own material, the Replacements showed that they can amaze when their collective motor stutters into action. Guitarist Bob Stinson and his baby brother, bassist Tommy, displayed some of their effortless excellence, particularly on such old, infrequently played songs as "Run It," "I'm in Trouble," "Hangin' Downtown," and "Love You 'Til Tuesday." Westerberg and drummer Chris Mars were in lesser form, but the band still evinced a good deal of their wise-guy teen humor and musical muscle – when they weren't cocking around, which was often.

Many in the jam-packed Palace house were plainly dumbfounded by the untidy ninety-minute set, which jerked along spasmodically through a crazed catalog of uncertainly essayed cover material. Even core Replacements buffs were a little staggered by the

variety of covers, which included Hank Williams Jr.'s "All My Rowdy Friends Are Coming Over Tonight," the Ramones' "Tonight," Black Sabbath's "Paranoid," the Essex's "Easier Said Than Done," Deep Purple's "Smoke on the Water," Bowie's "Ziggy Stardust," and an instrumentally letter-perfect "I Will Follow." Many of these unexpected renditions choked to a premature halt as the band blanked out on lyrics or chords; at one juncture, in mid-number, Bob Stinson stopped playing to apply some Chapstik to his lips.

The 'Mats' could obviously perform in this manner all night, which I suspect threw a chill into the bones of the Palace management. Seconds after Westerberg asked, "Break the cord on the curtain, or what?" as the band fumbled into "Gary's Got a Boner," the stage curtain began a slow descent. The Replacements defiantly continued playing until the power was abruptly shut off, and Bob Stinson climaxed the evening by pulling a reluctant Chris Mars off the stage and into the audience, right on top of a group of perplexed spectators. The fabulous fuck-ups from Minneapolis had triumphed once again, by failing more spectacularly than anyone had thought possible.

It is reported that in San Diego the next night, Bob Stinson broke both his guitars after playing the entire set in the nude.

Suspecting that the Replacements might use an out-of-town date as an excuse to play something resembling a straight show, I traveled to Santa Barbara on Saturday night. The band headlined a show there at Casa de la Raza, a Mexican-American cultural hall that doubles as a concert venue. Since the musical excellence of a Replacements performance is often in inverse proportion to its size or importance, I thought that they might rise to an occasion of such meager import.

Damned if I wasn't right. Playing to a fairly sparse house of neophyte punk rockers, the band, sober and self-assured, tore through a set of lucid intensity. The new material – "Can't Hardly Wait," "A Little Mascara," "Left of the Dial" – was hard-edged and melodic, and a bounty of old originals were crisply and authoritatively played. Just two covers were heard during the formal portion of the set – "Love Grows Where My Rosemary Goes" and "Hitchin' a Ride"; only in the encores of this rangy two-hour set did such rancid oldies as Cheap Trick's "He's a Whore," Yes's "Roundabout," and the Bay City Rollers' "Saturday Night" make a full-blown appearance.

The Casa show was an object lesson in the operative Replacements aesthetic: When they have nothing to lose, they play like they have everything to gain. When faced with a big-time situation, the band responds with punkish cockiness, by being as small-time as possible. They dismantle expectations with the same careless glee that Godzilla takes apart Tokyo; when it appears that nobody's watching, they snicker and turn in a well-behaved, powerful performance, like naughty, precocious children with a streak of the perverse a mile wide.

<http://watusichris.tumblr.com/post/116573966687/fucked-up-replacements-1985>

Here's the **bill to the Replacements for damage to the UC Davis Oak Room** during their concert on April 18, 1985:

| <u>Item</u> | <u>Estimated Cost</u> |
|--|-----------------------|
| 1. <u>Wall Surfaces</u> - Stained, dented and punctured throughout. All will have to be replaced. | \$1,500 |
| 2. <u>Table Damage</u> - Two of the three tables were badly chipped in the corners and will require new tops, the frames were not damaged. (Carpenter - 1 1/2 hrs.) | \$ 50 |
| 3. <u>Chair Damage</u> - All 24 chairs were soiled with liquid and glass, and several were badly stained with food, as well. None were broken. All will have to be shampooed. (2 student employees, 4 hrs., plus \$8 material) | \$ 44 |
| 4. <u>Floor Damage</u> - Carpet was badly stained, but has been protected with fiberseal, so will require only shampooing. (2 students, 2 hrs., plus \$4 materials) | \$ 22 |
| 5. <u>Door Damage</u> - The freshly painted metal door received three dents which may or may not be repairable. | \$ 68 |
| 6. <u>Emergency Cleaning</u> - The room was a shambles at 11 p.m., and we had reservations at 9 a.m., with no alternate rooms available. Thus, I pulled two full-time and six part-time employees away from their normal routines to clean the Oak Room. Total clean-up took 2.5 hours and triggered a total of 4 "person hours" of overtime to clean the remainder of the building after the Oak Room problem was resolved. (6 C.A. Employees - 2.5 hrs. x \$4.50 = \$67.50) (1 Asst. Cust. Spvr. - 2.5 hrs. x \$8.42 = \$21.05) (1 Sr. Cust. - 2.5 hrs. x \$7.25 = \$18.13) (4 hrs. overtime - Sr. Custodian = \$43.50) (Misc. cleaners, shampoo, supplies = \$10.00) | \$ 160.18 |
| 7. <u>Broken Light Cover</u> - One of the four ceiling light covers was broken beyond repair. | \$ 80 |
| TOTAL ESTIMATED COST | \$1,924.18 |

Here is a mixed review of The Replacements **concert in Raleigh, NC in February 1986.** (Reprinted from an unclear copy, most likely from the local alt-weekly *The Spectator*.)

DOSE OF THUNDER (by Jonathan Mudd)

We were so mad at the Replacements last time. Hundreds of us crowded into Cat's Cradle . . . to hear the unrefined gems from their records . . . to hear what made their fans so ecstatic, to see these guys before they were stars. We were part of a record-setting crowd. And the Replacements made fools of us all. Three tunes into their set they

lost control. Purposefully. They played . . . wrong notes, they ignored the . . . rhythm, they stopped and started at drunken will . . . Some of us got a perverse pleasure out of this waste of time and money, but most of us just got mad. “One more night to get it right,” they sang, and they were flattering themselves.

How soon we forget. An international record deal with Sire, an inordinate amount of publicity in major periodicals, and a spot on *Saturday Night Live* really smoothed the anger. The fact that *Tim*, the band’s first record for Sire, was one of the greats of 1985 didn’t hurt either. It is a disarmingly honest collection of pop art and crats, startling to listen to because of its . . . maturity, its unstragglng wholeness, its . . . wisdom. One listen and the dirty-world of principal songwriter Paul Westerberg could not be denied. Even with last year’s debauchery in mind, the record made all the hoopla seem reasonable. Everybody wanted to be a star, and the Replacements had reached them on their own terms. . . So we forgave and packed ourselves into Skate Town – no mortal club had the capacity to handle the Replacements. And this was to be the final date of their American tour. A little bit of history, perhaps.

Unless an hour-and-fifteen-minute show and four Replacements who stood up the whole time can be considered history, we did not get legendary stuff in Raleigh. The set’s length and the player’s stamina were surprising, but we were just fed a heavier, more controlled dose of the drug we swallowed last year. The Replacements have cleaned up their act. They haven’t compromised themselves, necessarily, but they now seem to behave well enough to represent their recordings truly.

The band peaked at the 45-minute mark, slamming through “Hold My Life” and “We’re Coming Out” with the raw energy that characterizes their best studio work. Bob Stinson’s guitar solos were trashed, and singer Westerberg split as many notes as he nailed, but drummer Christ Mars and bassist Tommy Stinson were right on top of each other, and the base-level teamwork held the songs. Kiss’ “Black Diamond” got a well-received run-through. Despite looseness, “I Will Dare” shined in all its Beatles-esque glory. Accuracy was not the point, professionalism was not a consideration. Energy and attitude are the Replacements’ strengths, and in this live situation, musicality didn’t have to figure in.

“The drugs are starting to kick in,” enthused Bob Stinson as midnight rolled around, and he probably wasn’t kidding. It was all downhill from there. Fewer tunes were finished, fewer instruments harmonized, fewer people seemed even to care. Leader Paul Westerberg seemed irked at more than an imminent hangover and did not take well to his mates’ jokes about the possible reasons (“Paul’s just mad because I f—ked his cat last night,” slurred Stinson.) In fact, Westerberg appeared fed up with the whole shebang. Did it occur to him that his songs deserved more than sloppy-drunk live realizations? Had the burn-out factor lost its charm? Did Westerberg feel the twinge of growing pains? He certainly was not amused.

And neither was the crowd, or the fraction that remained. As The Replacements finished a raunchy cover of B.T.O.'s "Takin' Care of Business," most people were pushing up to the exits, tired and finally intolerant. We'd gotten a glimpse of what this band, and Paul Westerberg in particular, could do, but down the tubes it went, like so many chemicals through the veins of the Replacements.

(You can hear the barely in control, covers-filled February 2, 1985 show at Cat's Cradle in Chapel Hill, NC at. It sounds like Bob Stinson was ON FIRE that night, both on his guitar and his mic.

<http://replacementslivearchive.blogspot.com/2013/11/february-2-1985-cats-cradle-chapel-hill.html>)

Tommy Stinson gave his opinion on the Replacements' legend (as part of a great article by in *Magnet* magazine on Twin Cities music in the 80s):

I still get people coming up to me and going, "Man, I saw you guys. You guys were so fucked up that you barely played your set, and it was the best show I ever saw." That always bums me out, because I really want people coming up to me going, "I saw you guys play, and when you did 'Bastards Of Young,' it fucking thrilled me to the bone." Nobody ever talks about the songs. I think Paul is an amazing fucking songwriter. I think the Replacements are as much about the songs as the drunken bullshit. That's kind of a bummer legacy. I'd rather have people listen to the record and realize that's what it was about. I've got no regrets about it.

<http://www.magnetmagazine.com/2005/06/12/a-tale-of-twin-cities-husker-du-the-replacements-and-the-rise-and-fall-of-the-80s-minneapolis-scene>

(If you want to understand where Tommy is coming from, **Dr. Scott Wickman**, a professor at Northern Illinois University, applied his professional analysis to **how sibling roles played a role in the group dynamic of the Replacements**:

I teach a class on family systems theory. A theoretical assumption is that the roles played in family of origin get acted out in groups, and that all roles are in their own way trying to send the message to the world that the family is doing well, or is distracting from anyone finding out otherwise.

In looking at prototypical birth-order roles, which can vary from family to family and depend upon a multiplicity of other variables, the Replacements tend to portray stereotypical roles.

Paul is the figurative "oldest child," which has been alternatively described as "leader/star/hero."

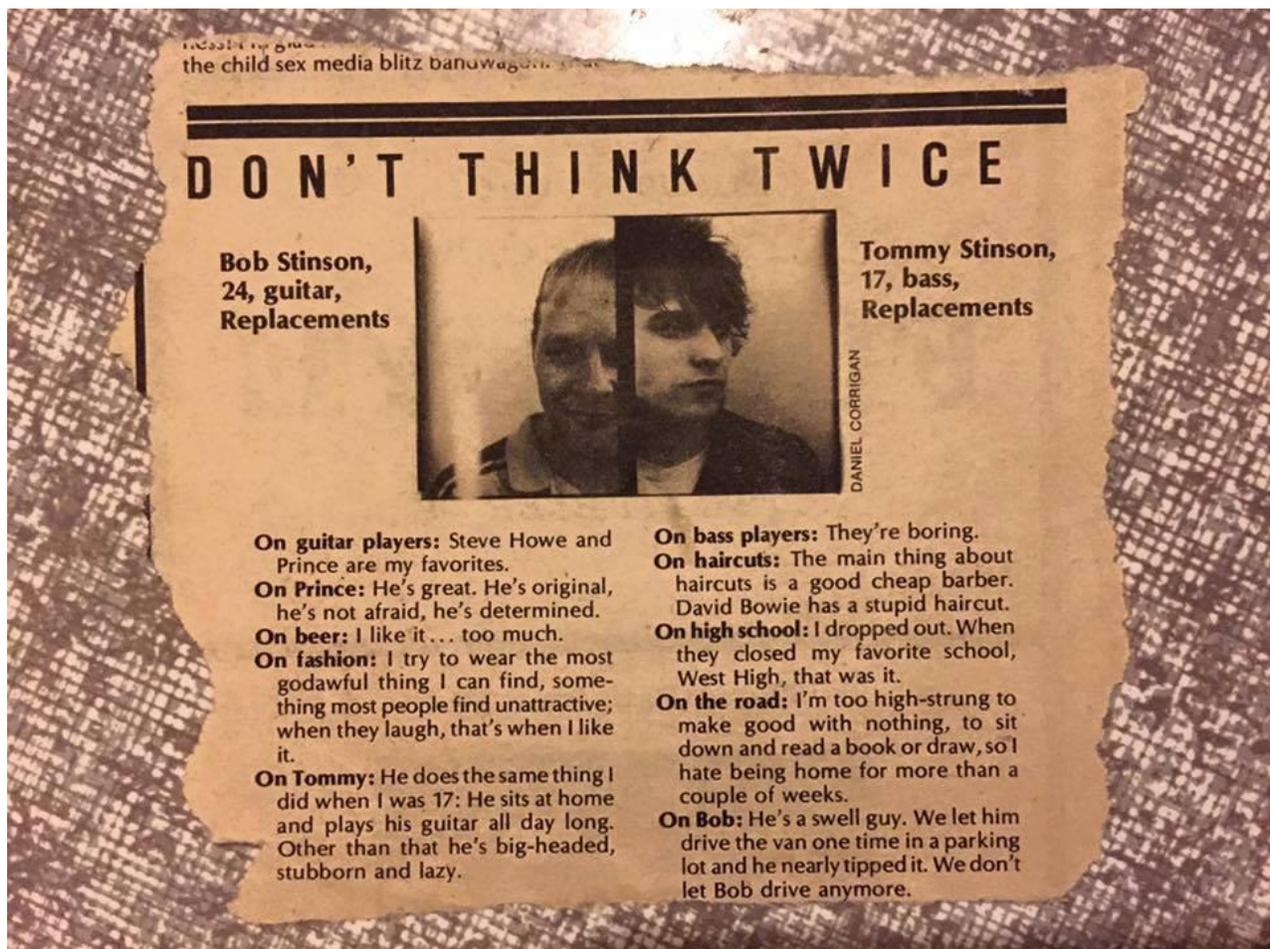
Bob is a prototypical second-born, described as "scapegoat" or "problem child." My own view is that this role is the most loyal to the family of all, in that they are willing to

assume responsibility as the cause for whatever is going wrong, despite all members participating.

The next role is alternately described as the "angel," "quiet one," or "invisible child." Chris.

The final role is the youngest child, who is a "mascot" or "class clown." They're the cute one, and, despite however old all siblings become, they will always be the youngest. Tommy, of course!

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/537792766296918/934846853258172>)



Chris Kissel from *Diffuser* has an interesting perspective about the place of the Replacements' major label debut *Tim*:

"[Paul Westerberg] was ready to grow up; growing up is lonely, absurd, depressing – [and] *Tim* is a record about this.

The music on *Tim* was too conflicted and too thoughtful to be the second-coming (or third-coming, or whatever) of rock's 'primal essence . . . mostly, the rest of the album elaborates this tension between being driven and being hopeless . . .

. . . restlessness continues to be a part of Westerberg's songwriting long after this, but the old contradictions that defined *Tim* dissolved. Bob Stinson was fired in 1986. The band abandoned punk pretense and chased pop full bore but *Pleased to Meet Me* is a great record in its own right. With the identity crisis behind the Replacements, everything started to make a little too much sense."

<http://diffuser.fm/30-years-ago-the-replacements-release-their-contradictory-classic-tim>

In **Steve Wosahla's** article on **Lydia Loveless** in *No Depression*, he mentioned how she talked about **the album that is her absolute favorite**: The Replacements' *Pleased to Meet Me*.

Lydia Loveless wasn't even born yet when the Replacements' album *Pleased To Meet Me* was released. But it's the record she has chosen to focus on for her guest appearance on Episode 91 of My Favorite Album, hosted by Jeremy Dylan. Dylan is the director of the documentary *Jim Lauderdale: The King of Broken Hearts* and host of the podcast in which artists talk about how a particular album has inspired and influenced their own work.

Loveless talks about how she didn't hear *Pleased To Meet Me* until she was seventeen, a time when she was listening to a lot of country and punk music. It was a time when she admits she was unsophisticated in her musical tastes. "When I was younger, I just wanted to write my songs and I didn't give a shit what was going to happen after that."

When a boyfriend put on the album *Tim* for the first time, the realization occurred to her: this is really what I want to do.

"It's kind of hard for me to bridge the gap between being the hillbilly kid who wanted to play country but I knew I could do something more interesting than that. Being introduced to the Replacements was my 'Oh wow' moment that 'you can do this and do it a little more interestingly which I don't think is a word."

Dylan traces the Replacements from being young kids throwing shit at the walls to writing more polished pop songs. By the time of *Pleased To Meet Me*, you hear horns and "Nightclub Jitters" among a diverse palette of sounds. Or as Loveless puts it: "You can hear them honing their craft."

The Replacements may not only be an inspiration but a parallel for Loveless' own ambitions. Loveless said she loves being in the studio and pays attention to every detail. Loveless wants to get more into production and as she describes, being able to "separate everything I hear in my head."

“Discovering the Replacements helped me realize I could write songs instead of thinking about what genre I had to fit in or who I had to please,” she tells Dylan. “I had the realization of trying new things and not being afraid of that. That’s why the album means so much more to me now that I’m older.”

<http://nodepression.com/interview/lydia-loveless-waiting-hardest-part>

You can hear the full interview with Jeremy Dylan at <http://mrjeremydylan.com/post/128242354750/my-favorite-album-91-lydia-loveless-on-the>.

(If you want want to know more about her, Gorman Bechard, creator of *Color Me Obsessed*, has a new movie coming out called *Who Is Lydia Loveless?* <http://www.whoislydiaLoveless.com>)



photo: Alton Purvis

Timothy O'Connor found *Rolling Stone's* “smart - at times crackling” **review of *Pleased to Meet Me* by David Fricke**. “It was a rare thoughtful piece on the art, emotion, ambivalence, and, yes, musicianship of the band (beyond 'technical precision' which produces golf claps but doesn't stir the heart.) Fricke 's insights smack down the usual drunken-darlings-coulda-been-a-contender shtick to which most critics lazily succumb. And, I've officially droned on too long again. Fugg it, read it if ya missed it, re-read it if ya did.”

Pleased to Meet Me, like nearly everything in Westerberg's oeuvre, is about not fitting in, about square pegs surrounded by nothing but round holes. What distinguishes Westerberg from the misfits populating his songs is his uncanny ability to speak for the tongue-tied, articulating their aspirations and insecurities with intuitive sensitivity, boozy whimsy and straight street talk — leavened with a little poetic license. As a lyricist, he is fond of the hilariously surreal (in "Can't Hardly Wait," he sings, "Jesus rides beside me/He never buys any smokes"), and he has a knack for dramatically potent non sequiturs (in "Shooting Dirty Pool," he delivers the acidic put-down "You're the coolest guy I ever have smelled"). As a melodist, he revels in a kind of perverted pop classicism, hanging his spiritual tensions and mischievous lyrics on offbeat hooks and change-up choruses like some grungy offspring of Randy Newman and Elton John; meanwhile, the band's guitar-drums gunfire threatens to turn your brain to tapioca.

But what fuels *Pleased to Meet Me* is the combination of Westerberg's instinctive grasp of adolescent trauma and the band's basement-rock fury, brilliantly produced by Memphis studio legend Jim Dickinson, who gets it warts and all, like the loud amplifier buzz that opens "Red Red Wine." Indeed, the jewel in this collection of wonderfully rough diamonds is "Alex Chilton," a frenzied celebration of the precocious frontman of the Box Tops and Big Star, who skidded into artistic paralysis in the late Seventies before hitting the comeback trail three years ago. (Chilton produced demos for the last Replacements LP, *Tim*, and plays guitar on "Can't Hardly Wait.") With Mars's snare drum echoing like a rifle shot and his own guitar balled up into a clenched fist of distortion, Westerberg salutes Chilton's genius with a knockout melody the equal of anything in the Big Star catalog while examining the insane pressure of living up to one's own myth — "Children by the millions sing, 'Will Alex Chilton come around?'"

Will children by the millions sing the same thing about Paul Westerberg in a few years' time? Not likely. In the Replacements (now back to quartet strength with new guitarist Slim Dunlap replacing Tommy Stinson's older brother, Bob, who left after *Tim*), Westerberg is blessed with a band of renegade realists, sometimes pickled out of their heads in concert but tough as nails in the clinch, anchoring Westerberg's meditations in bar-band bedrock. Tracks like "I.O.U." and "Shooting Dirty Pool" practically sound like *Exile on Main Street* at 78 rpm. It is ironic that Westerberg and the Replacements can make such a joyful noise out of so much anguish and insecurity. But on *Pleased to Meet Me*, the pleasure is all yours.

<http://www.rollingstone.com/music/albumreviews/pleased-to-meet-me-19870702>

Freddy's Open Mind has a love letter to this album that reminds us that...

even if the public . . . didn't care about [*Pleased To Meet Me*], the fans and critics did. Famed critic Robert Christgau gave it an 'A-', Pitchfork checks in with a 9.3 out of 10, the Rolling Stone Album Guide ranked it the fifth best album of 1987, and PunkNews.org rated it 4.5 out of 5." <http://freddysopenmind.blogspot.com/2012/06/replacements-pleased-to-meet-me.html>

The sound of *Pleased to Meet Me's* successor, *Don't Tell a Soul*, has a reputation as being either loved or hated. Several posts have come up in defense of the album, such as from **Gorjus**:

The hardcore hate the Replacements album *Don't Tell A Soul*. I've heard everything from it being "the death knell of the greatest band of all time" to "the only thing good you can say about it is that there's no goddam horns or goddam Jim Dickinson" to "when I first heard it, I felt personally betrayed." (This was said to me in the Magic Platter in Birmingham, by a record clerk who was a longtime musician, famous in some circles. The only response I could muster was literal slack-jawed-ness.) ... [but] *Don't Tell A Soul* has some of the greatest rock and roll every recorded.

<http://prettyfakes.com/2006/06/achin-to-be/comment-page-1>

Bryan Wawzenek goes as far as titling his article "In Defense of ... the Replacements' 'Don't Tell a Soul'":

Starting with the one that actually made an impression on the mainstream, 'I'll Be You.' With its chugging guitar riff and overwrought vocal performance from Westerberg, the song is a big, screaming, capital "R" rock song that never sounds as good as when it is pumping out of a car stereo. That our hero is setting the table for failure, on the song that was the Replacements' biggest success, is almost too perfect. And there's Paul, in the song's home stretch, screaming from the back of his throat about "a dream too tired to come true" and begging to switch places with someone else. The legacy of this band is that, even when they were winning, they were losers. The greatest song on 'Don't Tell a Soul' isn't so much about losing, but being plain lost.

<http://diffuser.fm/replacements-dont-tell-a-soul-album/?trackback=tsmclip>

For those that love it, they have many memories attached to the album, such as **Michael Hodgin**:

I remember sitting in a dark car, age 16 or 17, after working at my crappy movie theater job in South Carolina, in the summer when the nights were just as hot as the days, and listening to *Don't Tell a Soul*. And I remember it being the best thing I could possibly listen to at that particular moment.

It was on cassette and maybe it had something to do with the cover art, but it just fit perfectly, hearing "Talent Show" and "I'll Be You" and "Achin' to Be," wrapped in darkness, driving home with a deep longing sitting in the seat next to me; a sense of feeling adrift. My 1976 VW Bug was not factory blue, but it was still blue, and I was generally pretty unhappy. But the kind of unhappy I was was exactly the kind that could find anodyne in the music of the 'Mats.

Those melodies and turns of phrases from *Don't Tell a Soul* come back to haunt you. "Talent Show" only has two chords and the riff is not that hard, so you spend a decade

plucking it on an acoustic, just for yourself and no one else, sitting alone in the house. And all of a sudden and over a long period of time, The Replacements become one of your favorite bands.

<https://michaelhodgin.wordpress.com/2013/08/23/dont-tell-a-soul>



Trouble Boys talks about how *Don't Tell A Soul* was a difficult album to write and an even more difficult album to record (twice). The album's tour almost broke up the band. Bill Wyman wrote in *The Chicago Reader* (June 22, 1989) a review of their show in Chicago, the final performance of their headlining tour before going on tour with Tom Petty later that year.

Band out of time: Are the Replacements too late to be rock stars?

They want to be Rock Stars in an age that allows only rock stars. They matured as the great American postpunk band. Where the British--groups like Gang of Four and Joy Division--were entranced by the philosophical implications of the period, kids like Paul Westerberg, who never finished high school, only understood the pull of the emotions and energy involved. These he filtered through the pop-rock glories of his preadolescent days (everyone from Big Star and the Raspberries to Aerosmith and Kiss), and, working them over with a songwriting talent that's turned out to be one of the greats of the decade, produced something uniquely American.

Six or eight years later, however, we find the Replacements in a bind. Indie stardom doesn't mean much when you're still almost broke at the end of the year, and neither does having a bunch of critics telling you how great you are. Hardcore's strict code of conduct--be fast, loud, and obnoxious--enforced in the Replacements then as now by punker Tommy Stinson, must seem an ever-sillier constraint to Westerberg, clashing as it does with the heartfelt romanticism that produces those one-per-album acoustic numbers: "Here Comes a Regular," "Skyway," and "Rock 'n' Roll Ghost." "Why shouldn't we be popular?" he says now, defensively, in interviews. Why not indeed? . . .

Me, I wonder what kind of stardom Paul Westerberg wants. The show was too noisy to be considered a sell-out, too safe not to be. It uncharacteristically featured only three covers--the two already mentioned and "Cruella De Ville" from 101 Dalmatians, the Replacements' contribution to the Stay Awake compilation--none of them new. The band seems to be groping its way toward a sort of stardom that may not exist anymore. More than R.E.M. or even U2, both of which turned out to be extremely conventional rock bands, the Replacements are throwbacks. Westerberg's a mythmaker, not a pop star: if the rock era, whatever that was, is indeed over, the Replacements, instead of being the last, best band of the 80s, may turn out to be the last rock 'n' roll band, period. Westerberg must have an inkling of this: on the new record, he sings, "Take me by the hand and raise a toast / To a rock 'n' roll ghost." I'll buy.

<http://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/band-out-of-time-are-the-replacements-too-late-to-be-rock-stars/Content?oid=874054>

(Despite this review, people who were at this show said that it was one of the best they had seen. The recording of the show is personally one of my favorite recorded Replacements concerts. You can hear it at **The Replacements Live Archive Project** at

<http://replacementslivearchive.blogspot.com.es/2013/09/june-10-1989-aragon-ballroom-chicago-il.html>)

All Shook Down also has been garnering new fans since the ambivalence it faced when it was first released. **Matthew Shearn** wrote in *Figure 8 Magazine*, "I Want to Talk About The Replacements' *All Shook Down*":

But for me the moments on the album that stands out the most are the most overtly reflective. Like 'Sadly Beautiful', a mournful country tinged ballad, or the fuzzy title track. But the closing song 'The Last', proves to be a poignant and fitting footnote, that as the song tails off, Paul Westerberg finds himself pondering whether to choose sobriety or death, to a soundtrack is faintly reminiscent of 'Androgynous' quasi jazz sound. Seeing that The Replacements were defined by their heavy drinking, it seems fitting that the bands final album ends off on a song about going dry.

In recent years many bands have reformed, some reformations have been worthwhile, yet others less so. So when The Replacements reformed back in 2015, I couldn't care one bit. A sentiment possibly shared by many other fans, who have watched other

bands try and fail to recapture the magic of their past. The Replacements were one of those mercurial beasts, a band that were either too pissed to play, or extremely mind blowing at the drop of the hat. As soon as guitarist and fan favourite Bob Stinson left the fold, the group seemed to exist on borrowed time. And it would be easy to argue that if 'All Shook Down' was not thrust upon the world as a Replacements album, the band wouldn't have made it into the 90's. In short the band had it's time, and gently fizzed out to nothing.

All Shook Down may not be perfect, as tracks like 'Nobody' and 'Bent Out Of Shape' are perfunctory mid-tempo rockers. And while it can get criticised for not being a band effort, and the fact it's a record that would rather be tucked up in bed on a Saturday night, rather than getting utterly trashed and passing out on a park bench. But when it comes to the crunch, even if it can't hold a candle to 'Tim' or 'Let It Be', it should be respected for giving The Mats a better ending than the overcooked 'Don't Tell a Soul' offered.

<http://figure8magazine.co.uk/default/i-want-to-talk-about-the-replacements-all-shook-down>

In *Consequence of Sound*, **Justin Gerberon** talks about the album:

The argument here isn't whether or not *All Shook Down* should be labeled a Replacements record (it shouldn't) or a Westerberg solo album (it should). Breakups, departures, major labels, new producers, sobriety, etc. Forget them when listening to *All Shook Down*. The only question you need to ponder and discover the answer to is an easy one: Are the songs any good? With the exception of a few tracks, the answer overall is yes. *All Shook Down* is not a Replacements record, really, but it remains a really good record.

It's not simplistic AOR, despite a steady pace several songs take. There is deception in the pleasant, radio-friendly tracks, with the girl who finds peace only in the dreams of "Merry Go Round" and the misled winding up with the phonies residing in "Happy Town". The jangle of "Someone Take the Wheel" can't escape "fighting again in some fucking land." The music accompanying the melancholic lyrics is cleaner than all Replacement records not named *Don't Tell a Soul*, but thanks to producer Scott Litt (responsible for R.E.M.'s *Document* and *Automatic for the People* to name a couple), they don't neuter the album's potency. This is a tight record, but never a constricted one.

Westerberg's eternally cigarette-afflicted vocals still blaze, though without the decibels that dominated the band's earliest work. Could a 20-year-old Westerberg have pulled off the aptly-titled "Sadly Beautiful" as well as his 30-year-old self does? It's quiet and country-tinged, but more importantly it has years behind it, earning its title with a hushed marriage of strong lyrics ("From the very last time you waved and honked your horn / To a face that turned away pale and worn / Had no chance at all to let you know / You left me sadly, beautiful") and instruments (that's John Cale on viola).

These quibbles are blips of bad weather in an otherwise clear sky. In name only, All Shook Down is the final curtain call on The Replacements' discography. However, listen just once and you discover it's in all actuality a solid debut for a solo Westerberg. Some reminders of his the time in that Minnesota-based band remain (the punchy guitars in "My Little Problem"), and he even corrals the old gang back together at one point (the grin-inducing, strum-along of "Attitude"). So, yeah, I'll take a good-and-fake Replacements album over a bad-but-real one any day. I'd hold my life for it.

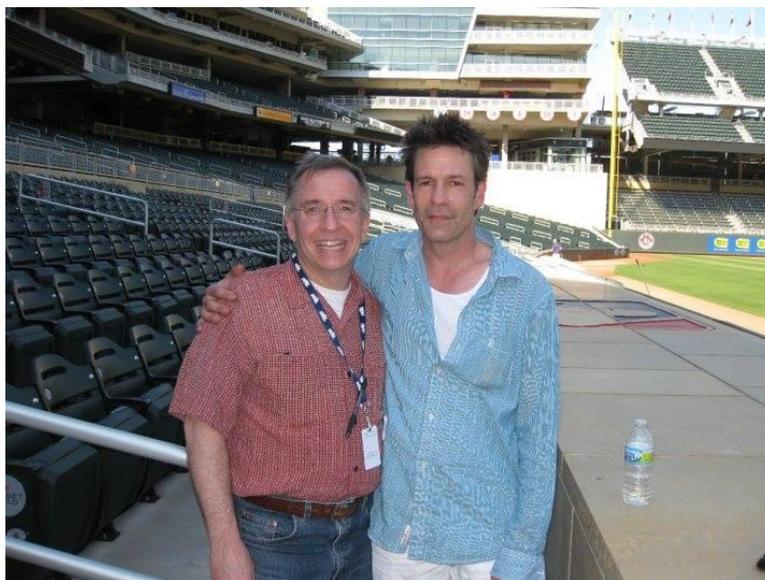
<http://consequenceofsound.net/2013/01/dusting-em-off-the-replacements-all-shook-down>

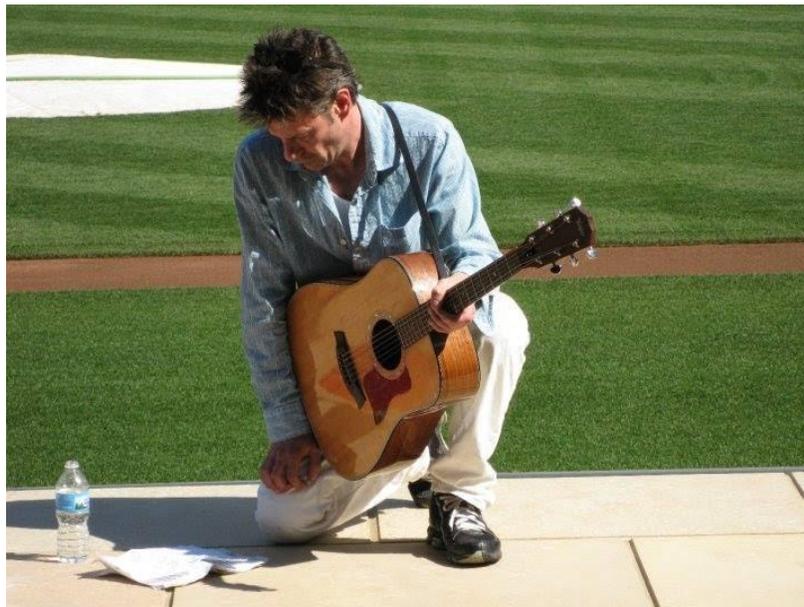
The years that Paul was more involved with coaching his son's baseball team didn't mean he was aware from music. **Kevin Lindaman Dutcher** met when...

I was the Music Director for the Twins from 2000-2010, which included their first year at Target Field. I got a call from a filmmaker (a former editor at Paste Magazine) who was shooting a film called, "40 Nights of Rock and Roll". He wondered if I could get them access to Target Field to shoot an interview/performance with Paul. I met Paul and his sister in the parking lot and brought them into the park. I chatted with them while they finished setting up, and then Paul performed on the dugout, a couple of songs including a fantastic number about his son's little league team called, "Dangerous Boys".

Afterwards the director sat on the dugout with Paul and asked him some questions. The conversation started strong but then slowed down and seemed a little stilted, and I had so many questions that were popping into my head. I finally just shouted out, "What's your favorite Beatles album"? He lit up, saying it was the first one (Please Please Me) because he liked the rawness of it, in contrast to their later more polished efforts).

While the camera was rolling we ended up talking a lot about music, which continued as we walked through a tour of the bowels of the stadium (he was listening to a lot of sax jazz, I recommended Tina Brooks:). By the time I walked them out to his car Paul was calling me Kev and we were chatting nonstop. He was kind and gracious, truly a great guy. A lovely memory that makes me smile every time it crosses my mind. These are some photos from one of my favorite days ever.





photos: Kevin Lindaman Dutcher

INTERVIEWS

Early recorded interviews with the band have been appearing lately, largely through the work of Trace Hull (maintainer of *The Replacements Live Archive* at <http://replacementslivearchive.blogspot.com>) and Jim Clarke (who has a YouTube channel full of Replacements-related stuff at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCOJPe_YK1GEyZ4R4SsilHpg). Recorded interviews are usually with more informal interviewers than those working for newspapers or magazines - which means the band is even more hilarious.

The earliest interview we're likely to ever hear is from January 30, 1981 from a tape discovered by Jim Walsh, author of *All Over But The Shouting*. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gl50rfMkSUM>

Another is from **WRNU** from the basement of the now-defunct Maxwell's in Hoboken, New Jersey on December 8, 1984. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ImUHI8DQHi4>

TOMMY STINSON

A recent **interview with Tommy Stinson** by **Chris Riemenschneider** for the *Star Tribune* explains what he's up to and what he's doing after the Replacements reunion:

Tommy Stinson offered these short answers to the two most heard questions about the old bands he is probably leaving behind:

- 1) Ask Axl.
- 2) Ask Paul's T-shirts.

Stinson also made it clear that after two years of playing with Minnesota's most legendary rock band and 16 years with one of the world's, he's content to front his own band again.

If not legendary, the group he has assembled for an upcoming record and tour dates includes some impressive players: guitarist Luther Dickinson, ex-Black Crowes sideman and leader of the North Mississippi Allstars; bassist Cat Popper, who has played with Ryan Adams and Jack White; drummer Frank Ferrer, also a Guns N' Roses vet, plus keyboardist Tony Kieraldo.

<http://www.startribune.com/tommy-stinson-replacements-run-was-special-but-it-s-time-to-move-on/323903361>

Tommy Stinson played four dates in January 2016 on a short tour:

January 21 – Milwaukee, WI – Turner Hall Ballroom

January 22 – Madison, WI – The Frequency

January 23 – Minneapolis, MN – First Avenue

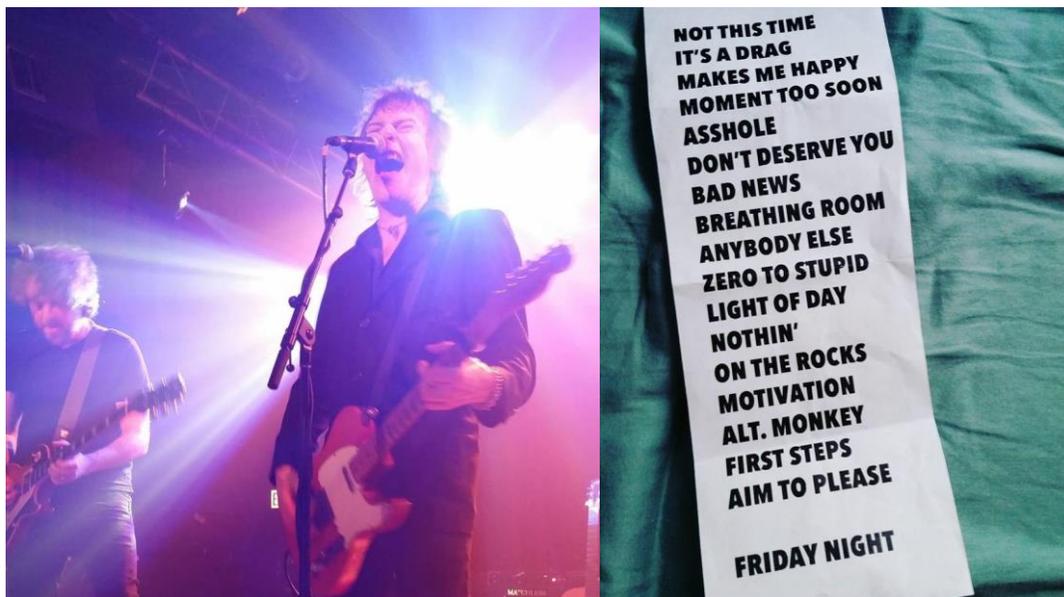
January 24 – Chicago, IL – Double Door

Danny Contreras Jr. saw **Tommy Stinson** on September 12 at the Turf Club in St. Paul, and return again on January 23 at First Avenue in Minneapolis where:

They couldn't get Tommy's acoustic through the PA so he played Bash N Pop's "Nothing" by the back bar, then came up and played "Light of Day" up onstage, completely unplugged.



left: Turf Club (St. Paul, MN / right: First Ave. (Minneapolis, MN)
photos: Danny Contreras Jr.



Double Door (Chicago, IL)
photos: Paul Easterberg

While Tommy was in Minneapolis, he was **interviewed** by local radio station The Current:

http://www.thecurrent.org/listen/minnesota/the_current/features/2016/01/21/20160121_lucia_tommy_stinson_20160121

And you are in a rush, **88.9 FM Radio Milwaukee** presents **88 seconds with Tommy Stinson**:

<http://www.radiomilwaukee.org/88-seconds/88-seconds-tommy-stinson>

Here is a **video of the highlights of the tour**:

<https://www.facebook.com/116892331772329/videos/811313975663491>

If you didn't Tommy's great **last 7" single L.M.A.O.**, which sold out of its limited pressing last year, you can hear the songs on YouTube:

"Breathing Room": https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oJ_n7gpZH8Q

"Not This Time": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=szWMSuTdeS0>

You can see him **perform "Breathing Room"** in the Current's studios at the end of 2015:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-m2ljai054U&hd=1>

Maybe you love Tommy Stinson, but **you probably don't love Tommy Stinson as much as Dana Och**, who was such a fan that she wrote in her high school health class assignment that her 'child' she had to carry around during the school day (represented by an egg) was fathered by Tommy Stinson. (I would put a quote here from this story, but you really have to read the whole hilarious thing yourself.)

<http://tellusastoryblog.com/2013/12/11/the-shocking-story-of-how-i-was-a-teen-mom-to-an-egg-lovechild-2>

Tommy Stinson has **two more shows scheduled** this year, with more promised to come:

THURSDAY MAY 5 2016

Toronto, ON - Canadian Music Week @ The Legendary Horseshoe Tavern

FRIDAY JULY 22 2016

Philadelphia, PA - XPoNential Music Festival w/ Ryan Adams, Kurt Vile

MINNEAPOLIS

Tommy Stinson and **Peter Jespersen** were interviewed about growing up in the Minneapolis music scene for *NPR*:

<http://www.npr.org/sections/world-cafe/2015/12/10/459213506/sense-of-place-minneapolis-peter-jespersen-tommy-stinson>

Lance Bangs put together an episode of *Made in Minnesota* that interviews **Tommy Stinson**, **Bob Mould**, **Craig Finn** of the Hold Steady, and **Lori Barbaro** of Babes in Toyland (among others) about the **history of the Minneapolis music scene**. The interviewees give tours of their old practice spaces and record stores in Minneapolis, including the *Let It Be* house and the Bob Stinson memorial bench.

"I owe it all to Bob cause he gave me this life that I have that I cherish."

People still just kind of conversationally have stories about him, or about the last time they saw him walk by. Do you have a sense that he still has a presence in Minneapolis?

"For sure there, but definitely wherever I am. He's always around. I'll put it that way. I suppose cause he's my brother there wouldn't be any way around that, for good or bad."

<http://noisey.vice.com/read/lance-bangs-in-conversation-with-tommy-stinson-of-the-replacements>

If you haven't had a chance to see it yourself, here is a **visit to the Bob Stinson memorial bench**:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VI51-wfi6iM&hd=1>

John Freeman, singer and guitarist for Minneapolis band The Magnolias, had a **story about hanging out in Minneapolis with Bob Stinson**:

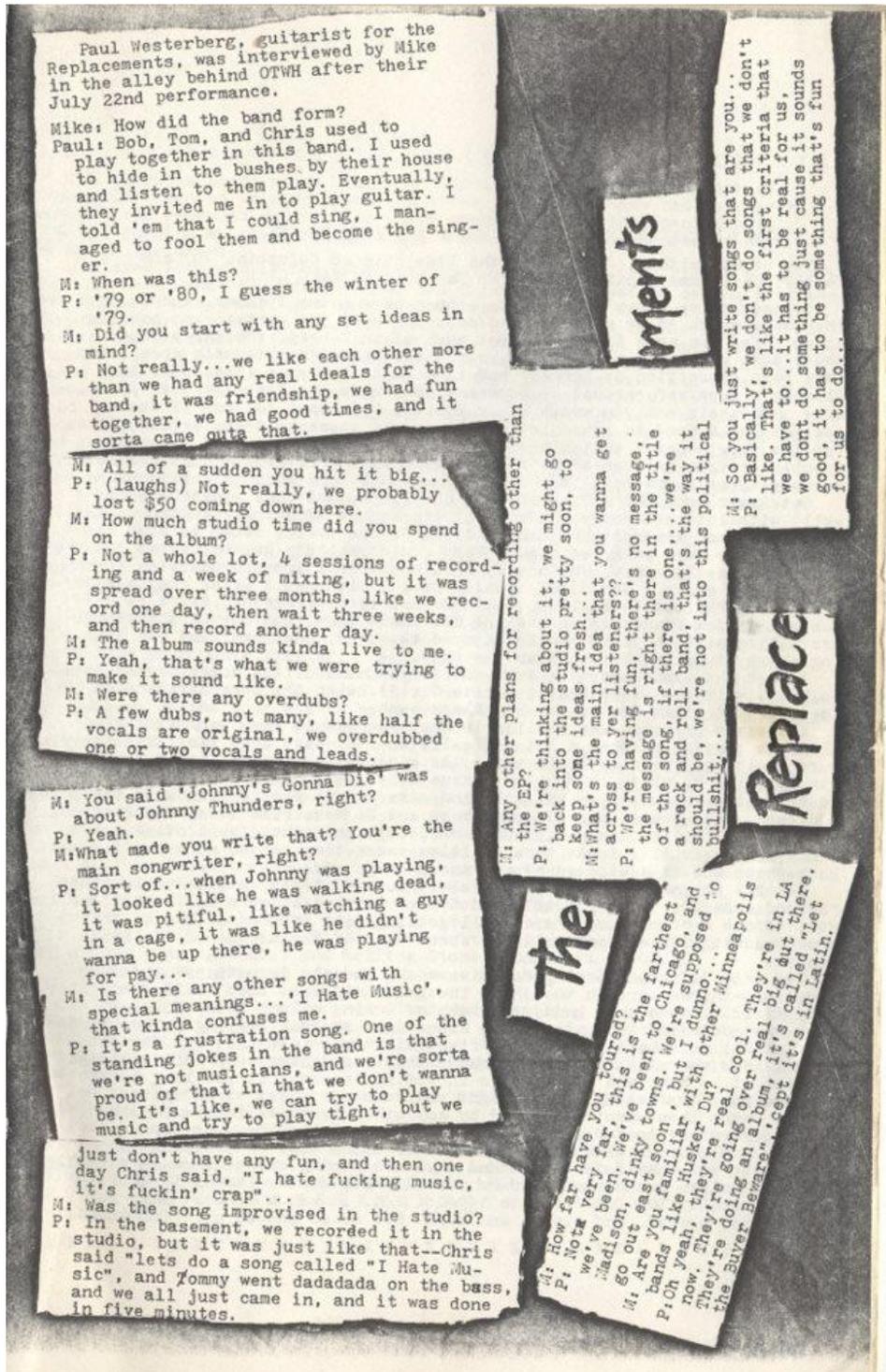
I saw YES once with Bob Stinson. He was a big YES freak believe it or not. Me, not so much. He scored some great seats from the Mats manager at the time. Target Center, rotating circular stage in the center of the arena. Seats were center court, about 3 rows up. YES played 2 sets. After the first set, we went to get a couple of beers, and I had to tell Bob that I just couldn't take any more YES for the evening. He begged me to stay, but I told him to meet me across the street at First Avenue after the show. Bob and YES!

Pitchfork has taken an interest in the history of the Minneapolis music scene. **Michaelangelo Matos** wrote an in-depth story for *Pitchfork* about the history of the First Ave. music club in Minneapolis. (A photo of the Replacements playing First Avenue for the last time on May 27, 1987 is about 90% of the way through the article, and the band is referred to several times.)

<http://pitchfork.com/features/article/9832-everybody-is-a-star-how-the-rock-club-first-avenue-made-minneapolis-the-center-of-music-in-the-80s>

Pitchfork also released a video interview with **Daniel Corrigan**, the photographer of the *Let It Be* cover. He talks about working at First Ave. in Minneapolis and his life in (and after) music photography.

<http://pitchfork.com/news/61941-photographer-dan-corrigan-the-replacements-let-it-be-featured-in-pitchforktvs-pitchfork-unsung>



WHAT NEXT?

We might get to hear some more details about life with the Replacements from their **roadie Bill Sullivan** in his forthcoming book, *Lemon Jail* (<https://www.facebook.com/roadiebillsullivan>).

Hello Backers and followers!

I would like to thank you for your support, financial and otherwise. I realize this is a long overdue update on my progress with *Lemon Jail*. In my defense, this is new territory for me - from fundraising campaigns and social media to writing, digitizing and publishing. I promise you that I am approaching this project with the same seriousness as the thousands of shows I've helped produce over the past 40 years.

Today I am more than excited to announce I've signed a publishing agreement with The University of Minnesota Press. The humbling support, motivation and confidence from Erik, Jeff and everyone at U of M Press has injected an energy and talent to help make the book something special.

It was your initial push and the support of my team at #Lemonjail that got this this project the notice of publishers nationwide. More information on a revised formal release date will follow.

Thank You

Bill



photo: Bill Sullivan

IN MEMORIAM

If you've ever heard 1984 live cassette of *The Shit Hits The Fans*, the person you need to thank is Replacements superfan Roscoe "Ross" Shoemaker for recording the show. Sadly, Ross died on May 20, 2015 in a car accident. **Michael Corcoran** of *Arts + Labor* magazine wrote a memorial:

Ross Shoemaker, who everyone here called Roscoe, came down with the great Oklahoma migration of the '80s. At first he was known as "the guy who recorded The Shit Hits the Fans," the legendarily awful/perfect, drunken Replacements set at the Bowery, where he worked in Oklahoma City. God, how Roscoe loved the 'Mats! But after you ran into him a few times and hung out at a couple 3 a.m. living room parties, you knew him as the guy who loved ALL his music deeply and sincerely. He was the pure fan, not a snob. I would tell him the Replacements were way overrated and he would laugh and rattle off 26 song titles that told me it didn't matter what I thought.

Following Ross on Facebook was a human roller coaster ride. His bad days were painful, especially after he lost his job a couple years ago, but then he'd see a great band or run into an old friend and it would be the Roscoe of old. "Awesome" was his favorite word and it meant something when he said it.

If you can live a life like Ross Shoemaker did, so full of love and enthusiasm, you will have a great one. It will be a real life of ups and downs, deep sorrows and bursts of euphoria. A life that touches many.

"Alex Chilton" is a song about being a fan. I'm playing it for Roscoe now and it's never sounded sadder. This is gonna take some time.

<http://www.artslabormagazine.com/rip-roscoe-death-of-a-fan>

<https://www.facebook.com/ross.shoemaker>

fin.

