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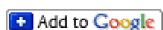
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Dinosaur Jr. - Bug Live At 9:30 Club: In The Hands Of The Fans

[MVD Entertainment Group](#) // Unrated // February 21, 2012List Price: \$16.95 [Buy now and save at [Amazon](#)]
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Review by [Ryan Keefer](#) | posted April 20, 2012 | [E-mail the Author](#)

The Concert:

The stigma of being a perceived one-hit wonder can seemingly be a blessing or a curse, depending on what type of performer or group you may be. Or in the case of Dinosaur Jr., you can put your head down and keep on performing, regardless of what the newfound fame and celebrity might have gotten you. The band had a mainstream hit on radio and video via "Feel the Pain," a single from their 1994 album "Without A Sound," with the video being directed by a young up and coming auteur named Spike Jonze. However, the album was the band's sixth at the time, and they have made three more albums since.

However, things have never been milk and honey for the three-member band that came from Massachusetts. The band's frontman and guitarist J Mascis was bringing in new band members as quickly as he was kicking them out, and the oft-played 'Pain' was a song that lacked the band's original lineup of Mascis, singer/bassist Lou Barlow and drummer Emmett Murphy, better known as simply "Murph." The individual members have also engaged in their own bands and Mascis has even performed as a solo act, most recently releasing "Several Shades of Why," a very good album of mainly acoustic songs. There was a great deal of volatility particularly between Mascis and Barlow, and eventually as both grew older, their hostility simmered down and along with Murph, the band reformed its vaunted original lineup and has released two albums ("Beyond" and "Farm") to critical acclaim, with a third on the way.



With the band's newfound reconciliation and reinvigoration, there was a desire to revisit the source of their greatest accomplishment as that trio, which was the 1988 album "Bug." With Mascis' vocals and Barlow's accompaniment combined with Murph's frenetic drumming, the album remains a tightly composed and underrated gem. When the band reformed, the decision was made at some point to play "Bug" in its entirety. But there was a small wrinkle, the band wanted to document the performance, and used an online contest (with introductions by former Black Flag/The Circle Jerks singer Keith Morris and Minutemen bassist Mike Watt, both legends in the hardcore community) where they chose six fans who plead their case to capture the performance on camera for release to home video.

So on June 25, 2011, at Washington D.C.'s famous 9:30 Club, Dinosaur Jr. went out and performed the album, along with a couple of other notable songs in the catalog. The set list from that night is as follows:

"Freak Scene"

"No Bones"

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Among the audience both at the concert and those who have seen the disc, I would presume witnessing the act of playing "Bug" with the band's original lineup is a rare one, but seeing the performance itself is entertaining to see. Mascis and Barlow up front continuing to play at a blistering pace after all these years is nice, and seeing them in quieter moments between the songs maintaining a level of friendship that nobody thought would have been possible a couple of years ago is also welcoming too. Many may have missed the raw, visceral nature of the band's playing growing up, and perhaps seeing them try to recapture such a spirit when you're in your mid-40s may be weird and (considering the nature of the band member's relationships with each other through the years) unbelievable, but at barely an hour, it proves to be a welcome stroll back to an era for a band that disappeared into the shadows as quickly as it appeared in the spotlight. But they remained comfortable in what they did and how they did it even then, and seeing the origins of the band back (and judging from the recent albums, in better form than they were before they left) is a welcome sight to behold.



The Disc: Video:

The disc comes in 1.78:1 anamorphic widescreen, with the result being about as good as one can expect. To be clear, there is nothing to really expect from the disc to begin with, since the concert is shot using several handheld cameras in the middle of a crowded (or 'intimate') club. There are oodles of image noise and instances of pixilation, though on the flip side there has not been any post-processing done to the image so it remains as natural as can be. The concert's appearance reflects the low-fi sound the band has had over the years, and I can't complain.

Audio:

There is either a two-channel stereo track or a Dolby Digital 5.1 surround track for you to peruse with your ear holes. I flipped between back and forth and the stereo track seemed to be the better option despite the smaller soundstage. On the six-channel track, the action in the rear channels seems to mirror the front ones, and neither track possesses any low-end fidelity/subwoofer activity, to say nothing of a lack of any real immersive experience. Neither track is bad per se, they both handle the music and in between setups adequately and easily.

Extras:

Some decent material on this disc, starting with an onstage interview of the band from fan and former Black Flag singer Henry Rollins (20:03). It is a little difficult to listen to because of the crowd noise, but Henry asks the band members about their inspirations and origins, how they met and how their sound has evolved through the years, and how their approach to some songs has changed. I think in a quieter setting it would be a longer and more interesting piece. We get that to a degree with "Backstage Interview with the Fans" (18:36), where the contest winners ask some of the same questions and some different ones, like the collaborations with Barlow and Mascis. An interesting piece for sure. There is additional live footage (8:44) of two songs, including "In a Jar," and "J and Dave Markey" (8:17) is a piece with the two as the front man and *Year That Punk Broke* director (respectively) recount their friendship. Rollins sums up the history of the 9:30 club on the disc's final extra (3:06).

Final Thoughts:

Live in the Hands of Fans may not be for everyone when it comes to musical tastes, but on its own it includes more extras than many recent concert DVDs I've seen, and the

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shoutout to the 9:30 makes this particular DC suburbs boy feel proud. Worth recommending at the very least because J and the gang do some solid work in this concert and for fans of the band, it's a strong recommendation to add to your collection.

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