



STAFF

## Dinosaur Jr.

Bug: Live at the 9:30 Club - In the Hands of the Fans (2012)  
MVDVisual

Reviewer Rating:

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It has never been more apparent than now that volume does not equal anger. On *Live at the 9:30 Club*, Dinosaur Jr. exhibits just how reflective and restrained volume in mass volumes can be.

In 2011, Dinosaur Jr. made some noise with the announcement that the band would play its classic *Bug* album in its entirety on a limited run of dates, with Henry Rollins opening the show by interviewing the band. At the 9:30 Club, the event was documented from the view of six fans who petitioned the band to tape the show, resulting in this DVD.

Although there has always been a sort of joke as to how loud Dinosaur Jr. really gets, on the DVD, the group shows that it is literally deafening. But, most perplexingly, although the group could put Spinial Tap to shame on the amp dial, the inner reflectiveness of the music is given full body.

As the band progresses through a fairly faithful rendition of *Bug*, Dinosaur Jr. mastermind J. Mascis stands fairly still for the duration with his eyes shut, seemingly channeling the music himself. It's almost as if he is the genesis of the sound, and it expands outward from him.

Because the music moves at a mid tempo pace, the band delves into experimentation with the color of the sound itself. "They Always Come" becomes even more lumbering, and slight fluctuations give berth to Mascis; the vocals make the song even more massive. "Yeah We Know" becomes even more spiky, but instead of going for the obvious more violent and explosive direction, the band seems to focus on the song's dynamic arches, controlling them and maximizing them, rather than letting the notes go wild.

Of course, where the DVD really becomes special is on Mascis' guitar introspections, where he crafts solos and other sounds so much from note plucking as he does manipulation of the entire instrument, bending notes the way Georgia bluesmen would fashion 10 different noises from the same part of a single string.

The intro interview with Henry Rollins is as telling as the music itself. While both bassist Lou Barlow and drummer Murph seem to be thrilled to talk about their own contributions to music history, and to reconnect with their old friend Rollins, J Mascis is so distanced from the conversation he could be in another room... or state. It'd not that he doesn't want to be there so much as he is terrified to be there. Fascinating.

It's also nice that the fans that got to tape the performance definitely exhibited the genuineness of real fans. It would have been easy for the production company to simply pick six attractive people and say they were into the band. Instead, those that did the taping (some who flew from thousands of miles away) were... let's say... a little unique... but it pays off. The film is clearly shot by people who know what is important when in the music, and focuses on the notable aspects of the performance as opposed to the annoying audience shots and extreme angles found in most generic concert videos.

As reserved and spacey as Mascis gets, it is unlikely that he needs any outside contribution to improve his art, as is quite clearly demonstrated by his work on this DVD. But, paradoxically, this DVD would have been as captivating as it is if it wasn't for the enthusiasm and--dare I say--expertise of the source material of the amateurs documenting the occurrence.

#### **Extra features:**

The extra features have a neat history of the 9:30 Club as told by Rollins. It also has a series of commercials starring punk legends explaining to potential fans prior to the taping the point of the project. For some reason, Mike Watt tapes his commercial from inside his bathroom (possibly while it is in use). Holmes is a genius... but man is he *weird*.

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