



Archers of Loaf

Archers of Loaf: What Did You Expect? [DVD] What Did You Expect? [DVD] (2013)

MVDVisual

Reviewer Rating:

3.5

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*Published on August 21st 2013* Perhaps why Archers of Loaf have a smallish, but extremely dedicated, fan base is that they never quite seemed to fit in anywhere. They have a certain indie sound-thick, broad, guitar lines with a dreamy texture-but they also fit nicely within the popular rock format. They'll get wild on stage, thra.

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Perhaps why Archers of Loaf have a smallish, but extremely dedicated, fan base is that they never quite seemed to fit in anywhere. They have a certain indie sound-thick, broad, guitar lines with a dreamy texture-but they also fit nicely within the popular rock format. They'll get wild on stage, thrashing around with a punk rock energy, but not so much that they lose control. *What Did You Expect* documents the band's 2011 reunion show at Cat's Cradle in Carrboro, NC and also shows why their inability to be defined is probably why they haven't faded away with their contemporaries.

The set list ranges across AoL's entire discography, with hits like "Harnessed in Slums" and "Strong" driving the show. But, they also drop in semi-rarities like "Slow Worm." If anything, the band show that they still have the goods. The performances are tight, with the band keeping purposefully on track, rarely breaking apart sonically like so many of the other mid-90s indie titans. But interestingly, the band seem to be at an energetic high point. The wilder songs, like "Audiowhere" where bassist Matt Gentling just gets completely down, stomping around like a T-rex, are nearly berserk, with the band approaching a Stooges-type thrash. "What Did You Expect?" could pass for Fugazi's wilder side. Gentling just goes nuts on the bass, which is wild. Likewise, the mid-tempo songs like "Freezing Point" have an inherent urgency.

The set is interspersed with the band talking about the reunion and focusing on what the band means to them. While the interviews are certainly a treat for fans, they sort of sap some of the energy from the performance itself. Separating the show from the in-depth interviews would have worked better. Still, as a first time view, fans of the band should find the whole package tasty.

The extras include some additional live songs and some more interviews. As a document of Archers of Loaf, the material beefs up the set nicely.

As the band say in the interview portion, "We were never number one at anything, even having the worst name!" Archers of Loaf are simply too unquantifiable to be the landmarks for any genre. But because they've always coasted just below the "mega-fame" level, they've had longevity with people

just trying to figure out what they are. *What Did You Expect?* doesn't answer the question, but it does make it that much more salient.

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