



## All the Labor

[The Gourds](#) / [Doug Hawes-Davis](#), director

[MVD Visual](#) - MVD6044D (DVD)

Available from [MVD Entertainment Group](#).

A review written for the Folk & Acoustic Music Exchange  
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If you want to really get righteously ready for this DVD, before you tear into the documentary itself, watch the bonus-features trailer beforehand. Not only did director Doug Hawes-Davis do a great job putting this wickedly cool, proletariat, ground level film out (it's already won a number of awards), but he really knows how to make a great trailer...and those damn teasers are an art in themselves. I can't tell you how many times I felt like throwing my soda and popcorn at the film screen 'cause some bonehead had either given the film away in three minutes or else put me to sleep. Ah, but the ones that make me go "Shit, I gotta see THAT!", those are like mini-movies in themselves, and this is one of 'em, whetting your appetite for the goodies to come.

You probably never heard of The Gourds, neither had I, but they're one of the thousands of not entirely categorizable ensembles in America who put on a great show that, like their music and following the example of their bohemian redneck selves, is also a

strange but highly enjoyable affair (the sadly defunct Asylum Street Spankers were one of the absolute best at that kinda thang). Lotsa humor, tonsa gutter thinkery, more mid-west/Southern hardtack philosophy than you can sling a greased pig at, good sloppy playing, good tight playing, a sense of grassroots anarchy, no damn respect for tradition of any kind, and a decidedly we'll-do-what-we-goddamn-well-please attitude are offered in abundance. Formed in 1994, Austin's The Gourds are just shy of two decades old and on Oct. 18, 2013, announced they'll be taking a hiatus for...well, no one knows how long, and no reason has been given (ain't said in this here film anyway, Jeremiah, but I'm telling you so's ya knows). Sounds to me, though, like they're throwing in the towel but leaving the option of re-forming open, just in case.

Who can blame 'em? They've been humping their asses off, gigging half the year each year, year in, year out, and haven't gotten the respect or exposure they deserve. And that's the key to this movie: it's a gritty but interestingly upbeat look at what really happens to all but the lucky few in the rock and roll shithole universe. The luck of the draw is damn near anything, and The Gourds got dealt from the bottom of the deck; most bands do. Nonetheless, they love playing together, have immense respect for each other despite the admitted bugtussles and such hassles common to every touring band on the face of the Earth, and put on a unique gig if yer fortunate enuff ever to catch one...and you get plenty of interludes of that here.

I found lots of possible RHYLs here: Hometown Band, Horslips, The Band, Ham Sandwich (no one 'members those cut-ups, but I dug 'em), The Who when Townshend decides to go hick, maybe even certain aspects of Widespread Panic, Sleepytime Gorilla Museum, and String Cheese Incident...were those estimable bands to go insane onstage. The film itself is 96 minutes, but dig this: the bonus features are even longer (109 min.) so you're really getting a twofer, ladies 'n gents, and I can gah-rone-tee you're not going to find another set of such musicians any time soon. That may even be a good thing, considering the age of conservative lunacy we're entering in this country and how artists tend to be trampled underfoot in such environments, but I'll leave the final decision to y'all.

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