



WEEN

At The Cat's Cradle, 1992

CHOCODOG

Portrait of the Boognish as a young spaz

"We must've been really good last time we were here," Dean Ween cracks as he and brother Gene take the stage. "Half as many people here." Perhaps audiences just didn't know what to make of Aaron Freeman, Mickey Melchiondo Jr., their funny voices, stage names, and drum-playing DAT machine. Over 75 minutes, the duo pops between contemporaneous undergrounds: thrashing grunge ("Tick"), jam-bandy teasings of Hendrix ("You Fucked Up"), lo-fi sludge ("Demon Sweat") and The Jerky Boys. Predominant, though, are Gene/Freeman's winning melodies: glam falsettos ("Captain Fantasy"), good-natured surrealism ("Marble Tulip Juicy Tree") and naked hurt ("Birthday Boy"). Deaneer/Melchiondo shreds, too. Nearly a decade old by the time of this recording, this diverse foundation of influences and styles helped Ween become one of the most consistently underrated cult acts of the '90s. No need for multiple camera angles on the 45-minute home-video bonus DVD (different tours, similar material)—it's just Ween at work, tweakishly over-gesticulating. Audiences got it soon enough. **JESSE JARROW** **85**

DEATH CAB FOR CUTIE

Something About Airplanes (Limited-Edition Deluxe 2-disc)

BARBARIAN

Indie-rock success story's remarkable—and remarkably noisy—first chapter

A decade has officially passed since Bellingham, Wash.'s Death Cab for Cutie released its first official full-band LP on Barsuk, and the timing feels right for a retrospective. Despite the

impressive commercial strides the band has made in recent years, odds are that plenty of recent converts haven't yet discovered these early gems, especially the echoing guitar-and-bass groove of album standout "Your Bruise." Even in those early days, singer Ben Gibbard displayed a brilliant intuitive sense of cadence and melody that set him apart from the rest of the bespectacled indie-rock pack. There was an emotional drama boiling over the edge of each indelible hook and elongated vowel.

Calling this reissued edition of the band's obstinately lo-fi masterpiece *Something About Airplanes* "deluxe," however, might strike the faithful as somewhat tongue-in-cheek. After all, the album sounds like it was recorded to worn-out cassette on a thrift-store boombox inside a massive, gutted, tin-walled, concrete-floored warehouse (and all this time I thought it was just the pitiful-quality MP3s I downloaded off Napster circa 2000 when I first caught wind of these guys). But even the record's lo-fi edge can't fully distract from the incredible songwriting and melodic sense captured on *Airplanes*.

The album possesses the catalytic urgency of Death Cab's early live shows. In case you didn't happen to reside in the Emerald City in the late '90s, Barsuk has graciously bundled the reissue with a bonus CD containing a live soundboard recording of the band's first Seattle gig at legendary venue the Crocodile Cafe. While the music is tight and inspired, it's endearing to hear Gibbard tune his own Telecaster after songs and Chris Walla marvel aloud at how many people showed up to the gig. It's not difficult to hear the spark Death Cab had early on, and all too obvious why they caught fire just a few years later. **JASON KILLINGSWORTH** **86**

JASON KILLINGSWORTH



Paste Digital VIP is a new way for you to experience new music & film that's been lovingly handpicked by the folks here at Paste. We think you'll be amazed at both the quality and the quantity of media you get with your Paste Digital VIP membership. Over the course of a year, you'll receive...



24 ALBUMS



4 DVD SAMPLERS



11 DIGITAL EDITIONS



11 DIGITAL SAMPLERS



MAGAZINE EARLY ACCESS



SAMPLER EARLY ACCESS



DIGITAL BACK ISSUES



52 EXCLUSIVE MP3s



EXCLUSIVE PASTE T-SHIRT



\$10 GIFT SUBSCRIPTIONS

Join Now

Start your Paste VIP membership today and get this astonishing array of goodness for a low monthly fee.

\$3.95
per month

learn more:
pastemagazine.com/vip