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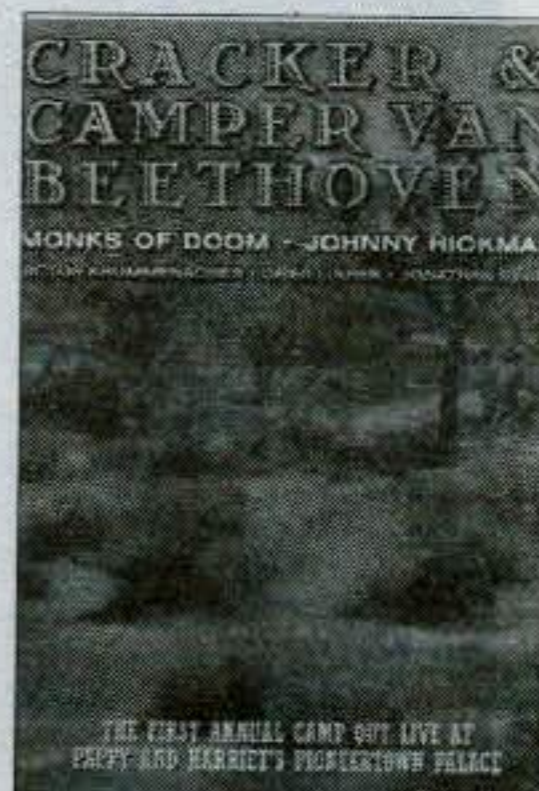
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Cracker and Camper Van Beethoven The First Annual Campout...Live at Pappy's and Harriett's Pioneertown Palace (MVD)

Unlike some other bands, whose "reunion" efforts prove that they just should have stayed broken up, Camper Van Beethoven more than does justice to their classic era in this two-hour Camper/Cracker/solo sets by individual members DVD. The live show was filmed at a remote desert campground in California and features five CVB songs, including two from the 2004 reunion release *New Roman Times*. The newer material holds up well compared to the chestnuts, but CVB's rendition of "Eye of Fatima" is one for the ages and definitely the high point of the DVD. Five Cracker songs are also featured, and these two sets show Dave Low-

ery in all his glory – simplistic melodies combined with brilliantly acerbic lyrics. Not the greatest guitarist ever, but quite possibly the smartest. Lowery, however, is only in about half the material here, and nobody else gets remotely



close to matching his wit and style.

As for the others, Cracker sideman Johnny Hickman fuses Woody Guthrie and Happytime Harry in his depressing segment. He made my eyes redden as I contemplated my worthless, pathetic job and the generally miserable condition of mankind. CVB alumni Greg Lisher, Joriathan Segel, Victor Krummenacher and the Monks of Doom all contribute mostly pedestrian-sounding alt-country pieces, but Krummenacher's "Bittersweet" is a beautifully melancholy song punctuated by a pedal steel guitar. In their defense, though, these guys pioneered this genre back in the '80s, and it's not their fault that others have mined it more richly. Lastly, the DVD has a performance of something called "Porchstock." It shows Dave at his outback best.

~ Bubba Donaldson