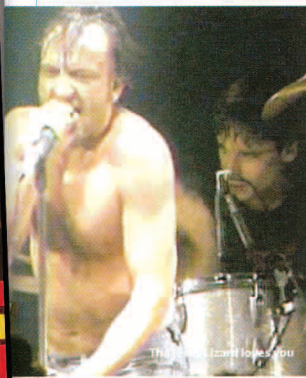




Harp
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WATCH THIS

The Jesus Lizard's Duane Denison and David Yow talk about their new live DVD and reputation versus talent.



FROM VENICE BEACH PERFORMANCE artists to crazy girlfriends, from Kiss's bells and whistling bottle rockets to Richard Thompson's compulsive refinement, we know that the term "performance" encompasses a great many things. In the world of the Jesus Lizard, a performance consisted of music, noise, beauty, ugliness, bruises and bodily fluids.

Legend, forever a product of sensationalism, favors the nonmusical activities of singer David Yow. A magnetic, compelling performer, Yow howled, bawled, shrieked and sang, sliding over fans' raised palms like a stick of butter on a griddle. And sometimes he'd get naked and perform puppetry of the scrotum.

Nuance—and the Jesus Lizard was a reptile of many tones—was so easily a casualty; people often overlooked the pummeling, abstractly gorgeous noise-rock backdrop of Duane Denison (guitar), David Sims (bass) and Mac McNeilly (drums). *Live*, the band's first-ever DVD, captures an October 1994 performance at Boston's Venus de Milo that shows the Jesus Lizard's

music wasn't just a jungle soundtrack for their monkey, but the vine on which he swung.

Yow made the rest of you look like the Osmonds. Were you the counterpoint to his madness?

DUANE DENISON: We were fairly abrasive and loud, dissonant, etc. but we were a fairly normal-looking bunch of guys. That's sort of why it worked. We played so tight and the songs were fairly rigidly arranged, then you had this kind of loose cannon shooting all over the place. I've heard people say that [the duality] is what they liked about it.

There is something to be said for a band whose singer can pull off the "Tight and Shiny" or "The Hairy Tangerine" and still have cred, unlike G.G. Allin.

DAVID YOW: I have no respect at all for G.G. Allin or people like that. If somebody in the band is bleeding while they're playing? Cool. But not on purpose. That's just stupid. And sitting on people or jacking off, that's just asinine.

What did people miss out on because they're focused on the balls-out maniac?

YOW: I didn't like that people expected me to do certain things that I'd done in the past. I don't take instruction. There's a Jesus Lizard tribute band from Portland called Monkey Trick. [The singer] asked me for a critique, and I told him that he wasn't paying attention because he just screamed everything. I like to think that there were some dynamics. And it was recently pointed out that if you play a lot of Duane's parts on acoustic guitar, they're really beautiful.

Blood, spit, sweat—what other bodily fluids joined you onstage?

DENISON: Oh, rivers of puke [laughs]. Tons of it. Oh, yeah. Too many things.

YOW: Fortunately, I never pooped in my pants. And it almost never happens that you have to pee while you're playin', but there was one time in D.C. when suddenly I really, really had to piss. There was a guy sitting on stage and I went over to him and I whispered in his ear: "Watch this." RANDY HARWARD

