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The Jesus Lizard

Live (MVD)
By Ewan Wadharmi

The **Jesus Lizard** was rhythmic, sweaty, loud, and sexual. Singer David Yow gyrates, howls, and flails, molesting the audience at every available opportunity. The Boston crowd that made themselves part of this 1994 performance tries to resist Yow's overt advances, at times pushing him back to the stage from whence he came. But Yow is persistent, and like a drunken suitor, forces himself on them. It's a messy, chaotic relationship, like The Birthday Party wooing The Stooges, which results in Yow floating in the crowd for a good portion while still singing, often with his cowboy boots up and head down. When the audiences is chided for wearing earplugs, dozens of the little marshmallows pummel Yow and litter the stage. There's a surreal scene when a crowd-surfing girl with a serene manner is lowered directly in front of the singer who, unmoved, grazes her stomach and she's raised back to the heavens...or the pit.



Plenty of low end shakes up the bowels, with strafing guitar piercing through. Backbone David Sims waves his bass like a firehose (good place for reference to FIREHOSE) although he's dressed like a lumberjack. Guitarist Duane Denison alternates chugging with sharp-angled chords and odd rhythms (good place for Minutemen reference). For "Nub," he breaks out the old slide for that ZZ Top on the highway effect. Early on, hard-hitting drummer Mac Mcneilly proves his worth, snapping a stick. Always wear safety goggles kids... always. Since we're in the height of grunge, Yow jokes that they're playing a Soundgarden cover. '94 was the period they released *Down*, which is represented by "Destroy Before Reading" and "Fly on the Wall." From *Liar* comes "Boilermaker," "Puss," and "Gladiator." With just "Killer McHann" and "One Evening" from the debut, *Head*. Goat songs are mentioned elsewhere.

The interview appears strangely after "Chrome" with no advanced warning, then "Seasick" is shown from earlier in the shirt-wearing portion of the show. Almost gives it that PBS "someone fell asleep at the editing board" production feel. The well-intentioned yet misguided interviewer is rescued by Yow's gracious storytelling. It concerns mostly industry talk, most interesting is the story of Atlantic balking at The Jesus Lizard's intentionally inflated signing demand of a million clams. Yow also takes some shots at their unnamed "engineer" who here will be named as the estranged Steve Albini.

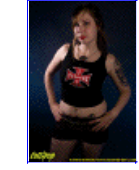
The bonus material is a short, but equally energetic set from a '92 CBGB show. Not equal is the sound quality. Songs are early stuff, notably, the brilliant "Monkey Truck."

Nice Touch: Audience members scream out several requests. Yow responds, "Keep guessing." (www.musicvideodistributors.com)

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