



Jesus Lizard - LIVE

(Rating: 7/10)

Finally.

Fans of The Jesus Lizard everywhere rejoiced upon hearing the news that they would at last have a legit documentation of the legendary Chicago band's intense style of in-your-face trash rock right where it belonged; on the stage. Although the band was fortunate enough to translate its onstage mayhem into great recordings, including two classic albums for the venerable Touch and Go label, The Jesus Lizard ultimately became live show heroes for its razor sharp rhythms, minimal but inventive guitar lines, and, most importantly, for the drunken and confrontational antics of its loony front man, David Yow.

Until now, those of us not lucky enough to witness the band's decadence firsthand were relegated to the wondrous world of Youtube to feed our morbid curiosity. One viewing of the infamous "beer bottle to the head of David Yow" clip is enough to know this band deserves a live show DVD.

So here it is, The Jesus Lizard at the height of its prime in 1994, playing a 15-song set to a hyperactive crowd at the Venus de Milo in Boston. The DVD also includes five additional songs, filmed at a 1992 show at CBGB's. Save for a quick and uninteresting interview with David Yow filmed after the Boston performance, these two shows comprise the entire film. No frills here, but I suppose beggars can't be choosers.

The 1994 show opens with a subdued and unusually shirted Yow prepping up as soon-to-be ringmaster for his carnival of debauchery. He sips his beer and soon the band methodically rips through its set, never missing a cue. Shot on two cameras, the angles alter from stage left and from the back of the room on a tripod. The primarily cut-and-dry editing techniques give the viewer a good feel of what it would be like to experience the show firsthand, and the back of the room shot captures a lot of great footage of Yow surfing atop the crowd, which is where he is half of the time anyway.

In the way of bonus footage, The Jesus Lizard: Live provides an additional angle, from a camera in the audience and, in a way, this perspective is better than the main course. Obviously the sound is not as crisp, but experiencing the band right in the crowd as they go nuts while Yow pushes and jumps around them with one extended shot has a very intimate feel, like a buddy showing you the mind-blowing band he

taped the night before. The performances help this as well, as the band delivers incredible renditions of "Nub," (head-scratchingly listed incorrectly on the DVD as "Here Comes Dudley") "Wheelchair Epidemic," and particularly "Monkey Trick."

A DVD comprising a series of different performances from different shows over the years would have been ideal (in the post-show interview Yow even makes reference to the hundreds of hours of footage they had amassed), or perhaps some backstage footage or even more interviews, but the meat and potatoes is definitely here, and it is good. You'll never wish more in your life that you were milling about in a crowd, pushing with all of your strength against a sweaty and drunken man screeching incoherently at the top of his lungs.

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