

The Jesus Lizard

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MVD

by Chris West



www.thejesuslizard.net

It's the Jesus Lizard concert you missed thirteen-years ago, only on DVD. I guess late is actually better than never.

Filmed during a 1994 concert at the Venus De Milo Club in Boston, it is vintage Jesus Lizard—vast and intense instrumentation played with reckless abandon and downplayed, often unintelligible lyrics. The DVD is a look back to a not-so-long-ago time in indie rock when musicality was king and lyrical clarity was...um, suspect.

The concert footage watches like a *Crowd Surfing for Dummies* instructional video, with lead singer David Yow splitting time between stage and sea of dumb-founded twenty-somethings. It seems that as hard (and often) as he pushes into the crowd, they respond with a push back. Midway through the charged set, Yow is shirtless, covered in a myriad of bodily fluids and drooling and spitting in between the mumblings of the verses.

Volatile guitarist Duane Denison rips through the guitar work of dirty chords and swirling riffs

with an equal degree of ease. David Sims holds bass duties grooving through Lizard must-hears "Puss," "Mouthbreaker" and "Gladiator" while Mac McNeilly pounds his way through his drum set, even if he is playing in his boxer shorts.

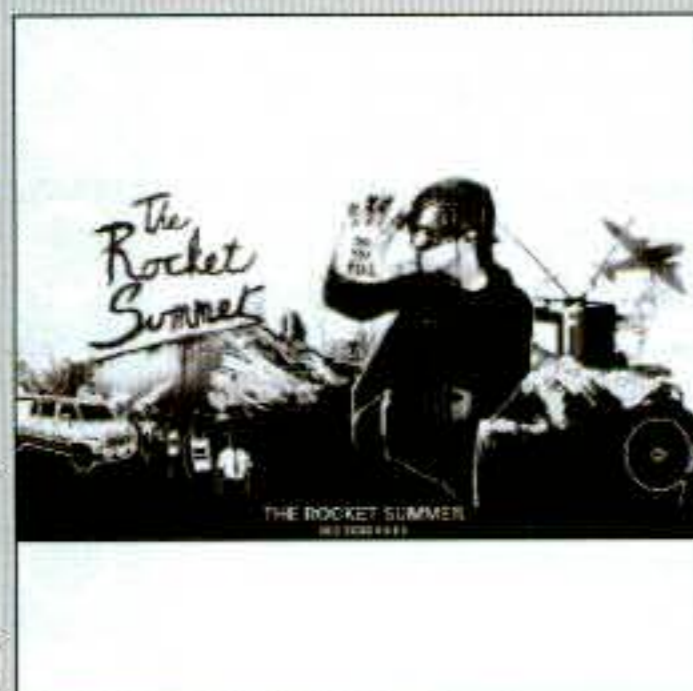
Though a nice piece of indie nostalgia, the group hasn't made any contributions since 2000. And with founding members in other musical (occupational) ventures, as good of a Jesus Lizard concert as this may have been, I'm not sure why it's relevant now.

The Rocket Summer

Do You Feel

ISLAND DEF JAM

by Jamie Evans



www.therocketsummer.com

Rocket Summer's first recording on Island Records. *Do You Feel*, is arguably a monster album. The CD boasts complex lyrics and intricate musical arrangements. It is the product of one musician, Bryce Avary, who wrote all the songs, did all the arrangements, sang on every tune, and played nine instruments on the album. He is Rocket Summer, a one-man musical whirlwind, who tours with a band. On *Do You Feel*, Avary played guitars, bass, piano, Moog, organ, Wurlitzer, drums, and harmonica.

The power pop/rock Avary has been honing since he was a teenager through six recordings has finally gelled. The kind of control he has had over his work, from hawking a self-produced EP to hometown stores in Colleyville, Texas, to co-producing *Do You Feel* for Island Records, has allowed Avary to develop his sound the way he wanted. His fan base has grown enough that he toured with the Vans Warped Tour last summer.

Undeniably, Avary and his music have appeal, especial in the Christian market. His lyrics

are fresh and uplifting, and his handling of multiple instruments is skilled. I just had trouble with the timbre of Avary's vocal delivery. It was well-done, but too tenor and too pop for my tastes. I also felt that the songs were all of a similar energy level and presentation. With thirteen songs, I expected variety. I also expected at least one of the songs to grab me, either by the throat or by my heart. That didn't happen.

For Rocket Summer fans, this album will be most welcome. For me, I'd give it a pass.

The Section Quartet

Fuzzbox

DECCA LABEL GROUP/UMG

by Carl Cunningham



www.thesectionquartet.com

A message in the liner notes implores listeners to "play this album at an inappropriately loud volume because rock & roll sounds better that way."

After a decade of performing other artists' songs with a pair of violins, a cello and viola, the L.A.-based band's latest release *Fuzzbox* should be, at best, backing music for a depressing PBS documentary. This isn't rock, no matter how it's packaged.

The album cover looks like a 70s punk record, but a garage band pseudo-punk look won't get you far if you're constantly making

the listener's ears slam shut to block out the noise.

Instead of loud rock & roll, *Fuzzbox* sounds more like a rock music-lovin' band of gypsies playing on a street corner. One interesting musical interpretation is found on "Paranoid Android," the band's take on the Radiohead classic. While it lacks the intensity and light/heavy contrasts of the original, it is a pretty rendition of one of that group's best.

Where *Fuzzbox* really falls apart is during their dreadful choice of Led Zeppelin's "Heartbreaker," a cover that perfectly sums up

what is so good—and so wrong—about this band. Get past the annoying violin squawking to the part of the song where the Jimmy Page solo should be, and you'll find some delightfully wicked improvisation that might make Page himself shake in his paratrooper boots.

If only they'd ditch the scratchy, high-pitched violins, and flesh out the viola and cello's groovy low end. Then, pair it with a Les Paul cranked up to 10 and a heavy drummer, and they'd really have some rock 'n' roll. That'll be the day.