

Suburban Voice blog #40

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JESUS LIZARD-s/t (MVDvisual, DVD)

While watching this live DVD, shot in Boston in 1994 (I was there, by the way), it got me to thinking that there aren't enough bands playing this sort of aggro-style indie rock anymore. Or maybe I'm missing it but I can't imagine too many bands having the sort of explosiveness these guys had. A sound that stood apart from punk and hardcore but had the same level of energy. 1994 was when Green Day and the Offspring were becoming the "acceptable" face of punk and it's about 180 degrees from the non-sanitized-for-public-consumption sound of this band. In fact, in the interview done with Shred from WBCN/WERS/etc, vocalist David Yow said Green Day were like the Knack, like the Dickies with English accents. The Jesus Lizard always knew how to put on one hell of a live show and Yow knew how to provoke, fuck with and bond with an audience. Half the time, he's crawling over them and remains in full bray. You can't understand what he's ranting but it's more the feel than the words. Yow is the focal point and but the three musicians who accompanied him shouldn't be shortchanged and the multi-camera shots here capture their combination of finesse and pure wallop. Hypnotic, thumping bass-lines from David Wm. Sims, snaky and slashing guitar lines from Duane Dennison and incessantly crashing drumming from Mac McNeilly. A forceful tumult, a rollercoaster ride that culminates in their Chrome medley. The riffs that these songs are built on—the crunch of "Mouthbreather," the sonic jolt of "Puss," the nightmarish "Bloody Mary"—each have their own personality. There are also five songs recorded at CBGB in the summer of '92 and the level of frenetic chaos is just as high. I'm often embarrassed about some of the music I dug on from the late-80s to mid-90s. Not these guys. They could probably still blow away most bands I've seen in the past few years. (PO Box 280, Oaks, PA 19456, www.mvdvisual.com)

- Al Quint