

Eric Sardinas and Big Motor - Live

Director not listed

MVD Visual, 2010

45 minutes, USD \$14.95

Ericssardinas.com

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Eric Sardinas is deeply steeped in not just the blues, but the flowing Delta kind that twangs and vibrates to the soul. Leading a twosome rhythm section dubbed Big Motor, Sardinas surges through the big muddy.

Let me backtrack. This DVD is presented as a 45-minute television program titled *Mav Music Live*. There are other artists who have appeared on MML, such as Todd Snider, but whether it's an actual program or just a DVD series, I'm uncertain. Keeping with a TV format, there are blackouts for commercial spots and interviews. Well, all three are present, but only Sardinas talks as the other two sit behind him, cigarette and whisky firmly in hand. Though he comes off a bit egocentric, the music is certainly worth a listen.

As well as being a musician, Sardinas is also a performer, who moves and slithers around his guitar like a snake in a desert. Ah, the guitar. It's a retrofitted resonator that is electrified; usually it's acoustic, and designed to produce a louder sound than a wood body to be heard over other instruments. The sound uniquely twangy, and so is used mostly by both blues and bluegrass artists.

Anyhoo, Sardinas uses his instrument as a McLuhan-esque (Cronenberg-esque?) extension of his own body, yet moving it independently so it sides up at different angles from his frame, all the while plummeting the strings from both hands, one plucking the strings and the other either holding them or running a bottle neck for a slide effect. It is very effective, as is his trademark black Stetson and, well, outrageously iconic southern rock garb (gaudy boots, etc.).

Some are going to want to compare him to other southern rockers, a la Skynyrd or Black Oak Arkansas, but I find a lot of Son House in his plucking style (the resonator helps). Still, he creates arrangements that make the songs his own. Supporting him Big Motor is Levell Price, an amazing bassist, and equally talented Patrick Caccia (from Milano, Italia) on drums. They buoy up each other solidly on stage and in facial hair, each one in a different style (soul patch and sideburns, beard, and goatee).

The song selection and styles range from some covers by the likes of Elmore James' "I'm Worried," Mississippi John Hurt's "Can't Be Satisfied," and Rory Gallagher southern rocker "As the Crow Flies," to a few originals, such as "8 Goin' South." He varies from deep Delta to modern southern rock, all the while making the "guitar face" during the many flashy solos, where his fingers fly over the fretboard. He's definitely the star of the band, and he shows it to the max (or is that Mav?).

It's a pretty interesting venture, as he moves around the music as it's flowing through him. Honestly, I've never heard of him before, but I bet he's better known south of the – as Archie Bunker once called it – the Manson-Nixon Line. The fans in the club setting where this is filmed sure seem enthused.

During one of the interview sections, he states that he plays how is, with nothing added, but this just augments his self-preening, which is forgivable if one just listens to the music. As the last interview end, he states, "Let's go get drunk!" Spoken like a southern delta blues rock musician.

Songlist

I'm Worried

Almost Done

Can't Be Satisfied

8 Goin' South

Love Me
As the Crow Flies