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News ▶ Features ▶ September Features ▶ Shonen Knife - 'Live At Mohawk Place 2009' DVD (MVD Visual)

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## Shonen Knife - 'Live At Mohawk Place 2009' DVD (MVD Visual)

Written by Ian Bell

Thursday, 16 September 2010 05:00



Lunch time, Wednesday 27th November 1991. One goth, one indie creature, one metallor and one punk meet in the student bar at the Poly of Wales (now Uni of Glamorgan) straight from lectures as planned. Ok, nothing unusual about that but this was going to be a special day because, as all the sporty types headed to their changing room of choice for some naked bonding via an afternoon dedicated to sports. The more intelligent group (I would like to believe anyway) leaving the bar at the same time were jumping into a car ready-loaded with the necessary cans, bottles, fags, crisps, chocolates and medicinal extras on our way to Birmingham to check out the triple bill of Nirvana, Shonen Knife, and Captain America at the Hummingbird (most recently know as the Academy).

It wasn't that I was a fan of any bands on the bill but when offered the chance I wasn't going to turn down a road trip and a gig with some mates - by the way this was before Nirvana exploded and took over the world. I think 'Nevermind' had only been out a few weeks and so was far from being known as the classic it is now. As for Captain America, gawd only knows, another NME indie approved flash in the pan maybe. My memory isn't as it was so I can't remember if we simply missed Captain America or they were that forgettable, but I have never forgotten Shonen Knife from that night, that is despite never really following it up and seeing them again on any following tours or buying any of their now 17 album back catalogue. Well not until very recently, (err, as in ordered yesterday) and that was as a result of seeing this DVD. On the 1991 tour they would have been out on the road in support of their then current album '712', or album number five. Nirvana that night, well, Mr C had some sort of hissy fit and I don't think they lasted more than 45 minutes which left me thinking what was all the fuss about, to be honest.

Anyway on to the reason for this review, a Shonen Knife DVD, and as it says on the tin, 'Live At Mohawk Place 2009', a club in Buffalo NY and it really is a club with a requirement of what must have only been two camera angles but, having seen other live in clubs DVDs, in this instance it doesn't detract from the enjoyment at all. A superb editing job keeps things moving enough and it helps that the band play 17 songs in less than an hour and is honest enough to show clips of them travelling around in their transit van. The thing that comes across when they are interviewed and in the live footage is that these are the type of people, we have all known them but very rarely, that it is impossible to dislike for any reason and this is what I remembered from when I saw them many years ago, ever so Japanese style polite, pleasant and full of charm.

The songs however are mini melodic punk pop explosions and despite their claims to be influenced by Motorhead, Judas Priest, Black Sabbath and Doobie Brothers etc, for me it is more the energy and delivery of the likes of the Pixies, Ramones, White Stripes, and even The Jam, obviously with the Japanese accented female vocals. Highlights include the opening track 'Konnichiwa' which sets the scene wonderfully along with 'Banana Chips', 'Super Group', 'BBQ Party', 'Muddy Bubbles Hell' and 'Giant Kitty'. Only lead vocalist Naoki Yamano survives from the Nirvana tour aside from the brief appearance of Atsuko Yamano (who was the drummer back then before becoming the bass player) who joins her old band on stage for the encore of 'Fruits And Vegetables'.

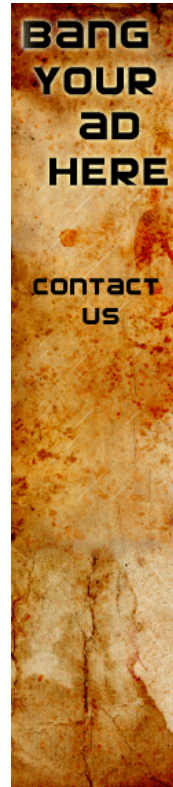
Overall, watching this live DVD was like reuniting with an old acquaintance who was never really a close mate, getting a reminder of what quality company they were. Now I'm just looking forward to the albums arriving through the letter box.

[www.myspace.com/shonenknife](http://www.myspace.com/shonenknife)



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Electric Ballroom - 25th March  
2010](#)  
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17th April 2010](#)  
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Centre - 11th December 1987](#)  
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