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Ween Live In Chicago

4.5
superb

Review by **Zachary Powell** **USER** (64 Reviews)
November 13th, 2006 | 7 replies | 7,855 views

Release Date: 2004 | [Tracklist](#)

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4.1
excellent

Review Summary: Making the top dollar spend on this collection worth it, Ween combines their active stage presence and use the long experience they have to deliver a long show and varied set list.

3 of 3 thought this review was well written

With Ween being one of those bands who gets overlooked and yet has a cult following being an alternative band, you would expect the Ween catalog to have recorded live concerts in the past and put them on DVD. Even with their 20+ career, however, Ween has waited until September of 03 in the Vic Theater in Chicago to finally officially put on of them on DVD for viewing pleasure. Over the years though with the existence of bootleggers and Ween being cool with them, live recordings of the band have been made available, even officially with the releases of *Live At Stubb's* and *Paintin' The Town Brown*. While those items remain simply a feast for the ears, they do not capture the live quality and experience only to be captured at one of their shows. The jam sessions, the smoking and rude songs can be heard on the CD, but what makes this release great is the added visual feature, being able to see the band after they released *Quebec* and hearing songs from that album and others. This CD/DVD is great for any real Ween fan or for anyone who has wanted to live the Ween experience, but for one reason or another hasn't been able to.

The CD

The excitement and energy come from center stage, and while there is so much added from the element of seeing it live, the CD itself is worthy enough to have been released by itself. Not wanting to waste any time, the event starts off with the same tune that starts off *Chocolate and Cheese*, the quick paced and live gem, *Take Me Away*. It is the whole band that gets a workout with this number and each member is easily audible; the core and founding members of the whole idea of Ween and the band Gene and Dean Ween are there, both on guitar and vocals as listed but with Gene getting his normal work mostly as vocalist and Dean grabbing the axe. The rest of the big band that they have tacked on over the years is present also, presenting Claude Coleman Jr. on drums, Dave Dreiwitz on bass and Glenn McClelland playing the keyboard and on this sound is heard facing off with Dean during the verses before he lets Dean take the bridge in the song playing on top of Coleman's consistent beats. Getting back into the song features Dreiwitz more heavily as the song goes out but then comes back in the tune with the beginning verse and then ending it on that note. From there we have begun and are ready to start.

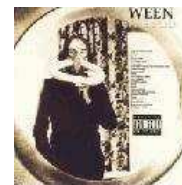
Since we began on such a high and fast paced note, it seems the band felt it necessary to tone it down, and indeed it does not only in the matter of tempo, but also in the song content/ For this they refer to three consecutive tracks from their last two albums, two from the chilled out *White Pepper* and one of the calmer ones from the slightly whacked out *Quebec*. What good that can be taken out of these comes from each individual track, something from each of them is quality and present, but it lacks the full band effort and spotlights more on a singular member, though the rest of the band is still present. Take the next track, *The Grobe* for instance, yes we have McClelland bridging the gaps and introducing it with something that sounds similar to a keyboard being on crack, and Dean takes control with guitar tangents during said bridges, but the song itself is rather draggy and not a good choice coming off such an adrenaline exciter such as *Take Me Away* is. While the song choices may be questionable, a good quality about the band live is that their sets change often, letting b-sides be played often and having a varied unpredictable set list (except for the constant *Roses Are Free*) which the band plays every show since Phish did such a horrible cover of it). In a way of resorting to the same formula that got *The Grobe* across, Dean is again called upon to deliver the goods on the next *Quebec* born track, *Transdermal Celebration*. Again starting off with an uninteresting track but having the live version be much better is what the band does well, and they accomplish that here. While remaining in the theme of "songs off the last two albums" but introducing the idea of an extended introduction and one done well with normal sounding piano bu McClelland, [i]Even If You Don't introduces itself as one of Ween's stranger tracks, recalling experiences with a not so great romantic interest. "*Rootin' through the garbage/For treasures in the trash pile/Seeing my expression/Would always make you smile*" goes the entertaining and alive tune, certainly a highlight especially helped out by McClelland's consistent play as pianist.

Now that some of the newer stuff is out of the way, the band can get to what the core

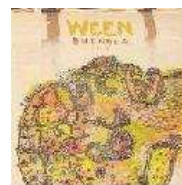
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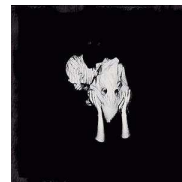


Shinola Vol 1



God Ween Satan: The Onenes

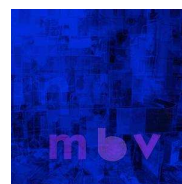
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audiences knows and loves best, and it begins with the *Chocolate and Cheese* highlight, *Voodoo Lady*. Anticipation and buildup is used for this as well, with a longer than usual introduction part, played mainly by Dean and Dreiwitz. From there the verse can take place with Gene impressing the crowd by still being able to sing out the "Boogie-oogie-oogie-oogie"s that accent the chorus and are signature for the song, What is the unusual part of the song is the priority taken by Dean to basically do the bridge for the extended song, making it nearly eight minutes in length and capping off a group effort of a song. Following in the key of signature Ween numbers are *The H.I.V. Song*, *Baby Bitch*, and the previously mentioned *Roses Are Free*. Each tune is played like the true version each is except *Roses Are Free* receiving extended treatment, and the whole band singing along on the chorus/entire song of *The H.I.V.* song, spouting "H.I.V.!/A.I.D.S!/H.I.V.!/A.I.D.S.!" which is basically the entire song.

Doing not only pure electronically powered songs are the band, who can also make good due playing acoustic (or as no one calls it, AcoustiWeen! /lame). The ballads begin with *Chocolate Town* which calmly but cleverly recalls that brown place called *Chocolate Town*; Gene and Dean reach for the acoustics, Dean playing rhythm until his sweet bridging solo with Coleman Jr. playing the role of rhythm section. The dynamics may be different for Ween decides to strop themselves down, but it just adds to the show and displays their seemingly endless section of talent. The best thing is with the acoustic, ballad-y, short, and long songs of the stellar CD, there is even a DVD that goes with it. Overkill in terms of goodness? You bet.

The DVD

The visual disc features many of the things that have been previously mentioned; Dene using his funky looking fan made guitar (which he switches off with his Strat) to hold his cigarette, Weizman handing his bass over to Dean for the old weird love ballad, *Don't Laugh, I Love You*, and the McClelland lead version of Led Zeppelin's *All Of My Love*. What appears on the DVD and enhances the experience are things that aren't on the CD due to space issues or

simply not being able to hold them. One of these key things are the songs, some of the best coming last, the kiss off of *You Fucked Up*, the multiple drummer P.O.V.s which are viewable from the back of the stage, the encore of the sweet sounding *She Fucks Me* and the closer with the faux-Irish big ol' singalong, *The Blarney Stone*. Sure it would be nice just to have the Cd just to keep up with the released live material from Ween, but the DVD just gives it so much flavor it makes itself a necessary component.

This can be picked up to serve a multitude of purposes, it can be used as an introduction to the band and serve a plate of songs, though the distribution of per album is rather low just as the production value is off (in this case its good, reeally good). It can also be acquired to cap off a real fan's collection of the bands material; whatever reason it is a great addition to any advanced or beginning Ween library.

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Zesty Mordant

November 13th 2006



1196 Comments

Album Rating: 4.0

yes, there are few things better than live ween. or ween in general for any matter.

Zebra

Moderator

November 13th 2006



2647 Comments

This review really makes me want to see Ween live.

Zmev

November 13th 2006



983 Comments

Album Rating: 4.0

If you get the chance to jump on it. They are amazing live and even though when I saw them they were second on the bill to the Flaming Lips, it was still a great experience, being around so many fellow followers of the Boognish, plus Gene's chanting before some songs adds to it. Even though its not the same the DVD offers 100(!)+ minutes of content.This Message Edited On 11.13.06

Zmev

November 14th 2006