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WEEN

Live At Cat's Cradle, 1994
Chocodog/MVD Audio, 2008
Review by Joe Milliken

Live at Cat's Cradle features an early and rare, stripped down Gene and Dean Ween from the early 1990's, recorded live at the Cat's Cradle in Chapel Hill, NC. And despite the folksy motif, the music is powerful, combining Gene's often absurd lyrics and strange and twisted melodies combined with Dean's crazy-distorted guitar. Oh - and lest we forget the strangeness of pre-recorded bass, drums and samples blaring from a tape deck! Yes, this all created quite a sound from the early duo-beginnings of this band, before a real drummer and bass player joined Ween around 1994.

Early Ween "duo shows" were raw and full of nervous energy, some nights it worked and some nights it didn't. There are several live gems for the hard core Ween fan including "Mango Woman", "You Fucked Up" and "Nan", as well as infant versions of "Birthday Boy" and "Buckingham Green". The way this duo would use their voices as not only vehicles for their words but as instruments themselves, is not only innovative - but downright fun! The trippy groove of "Cover It With Gas And Set It On Fire" with it's Hendrix-like jams is quite creative.

The accompanying DVD is also real treat, featuring rare live footage from a 1991 Holland performance on Halloween night, as well as additional video from a WTSR radio broadcast in Trenton, NJ a 1992 Columbus, Ohio show. Overall this package is a great representation of Ween in their infant, raw stages of live performance.