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CLUTCH

Full Fathom Five (CD/DVD)

Weathermaker Music



Clutch's first ever DVD is here. All we've had for video footage is bootlegs and such with less than sufficient audio or video on Youtube or whatnot. Now, instead of preaching to people about how phenomenal Clutch is in concert, I can just show them! Along with *Full Fathom Five*; *Video Field Recordings; 2007-2008*, they released companion CD *Full Fathom Five*; *Audio Field Recordings; 2007-2008*. Their first single is "Texan Book of the Dead" (originally from their self-titled, second full-length album in 1995).

Finally, a solid presentation where you can see that special 'oomph' that Clutch live is. Even though nothing can substitute actually being there, now you can visually re-live that power anytime you want. AND you have yet another outstanding live Clutch album to add to your collection. Oh, did I forget to describe what Clutch sounds like? How about I just tell you this; I have never met anyone who has heard Clutch's music (excluding the old farts I work with who are forced) that did not like them.

Full Fathom Five is snippets of shows from four different venues on five separate days in late 2007 and early 2008; Hi-Fi (Sydney, Australia), Mr. Small's Theatre (Pittsburgh, PA), Boulder Theater (Boulder, CO), and Starland Ballroom (Sayreville, NJ). As with everything else Clutch does, it's really all about the music. No frills. Except they did throw in two very hidden extras in both of the song selections menus. Go to "main" and then scroll right on each menu and you will find a few minutes of extra footage and one of the secrets to their signature sound.

Much like their always different set lists on tour from night to night, they chunk together some related songs and shuffle their order about on both *Full Fathom Five* releases. But they are not the same. Between the CD and DVD are 22 live recordings from their nearly endless supply. Of these, 13 of the tracks are identical. The Audio Field Recordings are 15 tracks of which "Cypress Grove" and "Mr. Shiny Cadillackness" are unique to the CD only. The theme of *Full Fathom Five* is like a 'best of' for the general setlist of the past year or so of touring.

There's a better mix on the Video Field Recordings to make it more like a 'real' Clutch gig than a Clutch gig from this past *From Beale Street to Oblivion* tour. There are 7 tracks that are unique to the DVD. Two of my absolute favorite Clutch songs are there, "Escape From the Prison Planet" and "The Soapmakers" along with "Big News" I and II, "Burning Beard", "You Can't Stop Progress" and "Power Player." Some more highlights of *Full Fathom Five* are "Animal Farm", "Ship of Gold" and "The Mob Goes Wild." This DVD is 95 minutes of video footage of the very thing that knocked Lynyrd Skynyrd out of the number one slot in my 'favorite-band-of-all-time list' (which Skynyrd had occupied for over a decade); live Clutch. There aren't a whole lot of bands that can consistently put out



great music album after album, start to finish with the added bonus of killer artwork in every jacket.

For me, Clutch is the most moving live band. Every jam band I have ever heard has bored me (which is probably why I have little patience for jam and progressive bands with lengthy instrumentals). My attention just goes elsewhere. Clutch is by no means a 'jam band' per se (they have their other band [The Bakerton Group](#) for just that purpose) but they are my only exception so far. Some tracks that are extended versions were "The Dragonfly", "The Yeti" and "The Soapmakers." With Eric Oblander (harp) and Bryan Hinkley (guitar) on tour with them, they were able to spice up their sets like with "Cypress Grove", "Texan Book of the Dead", "Big News" and "Mr. Shiny Cadillacness." When they go into a jam, it still sounds like actual music and not something alien, the percussion is jaw-dropping EVERY time, and they never get monotonous or over-extend the length of the songs. There's no reason for my attention to wander. This is a feat that no other band I've heard have been able to accomplish. Plus, watching the 'Master Gaster' on the skins is riveting. You can see the bliss on his face. It shows that Clutch loves what they do and that is why they excel.

I treasure when Clutch releases their live recordings because all of their studio albums have unique vibes. Each album has slightly different styles of their nonpareil rock/metal. Clutch in concert always brings you intimate visits to these vibes. Sure they can make some fantastic music in the studio, but there's always a poignant difference in the same songs when they play for an audience. You can sense that they play to their crowd and the more enthusiastic the crowd, the more gusto they put into it. It seems like they choose their setlist based on location as well. They're not going to give the full-on Clutch to say... a crowd of first-timers standing around like cattle with "duh" on their faces at some megafestival (note: I am not referring to the Sydney crowd at all, as they were more tame than US but respectful and appreciative and that wasn't a festival. I am referring to the crowd at their last Locobazooka appearance). BUT, they sure will at the Starland Ballroom in New Jersey with a shoulder to shoulder mob at their feet. That's when they like to whip out the old stuff and get everyone riled up. Ahwoooooo!

Full Fathom Five has some excellent examples of Clutch versatility. Between pleasingly extended versions of timeless Clutch songs, to one-of-a-kind drum solos, to watching the king of the mic in action and a good amount of the badass classic Clutch material that made them the 'Kings of the Underground', *Full Fathom Five* is not something anyone should miss out on. I only hope this doesn't cause a mad rush for tickets and their days of playing smaller venues to be over. My only complaints are I would have liked some more of my favorite songs and much more than five minutes of extras.

A -Alesha