

My Morning Jacket - Okonokos (2006)

Written by bluesever

Wednesday, 27 April 2011 18:32 - Last Updated Wednesday, 22 August 2018 09:02

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CD1

1. "Wordless Chorus" - 4:14
2. "It Beats 4 U" - 4:26
3. "Gideon" - 3:48 [play](#)
4. "One Big Holiday" - 5:56
5. "I Will Sing You Songs" - 8:38
6. "Lowdown" - 4:14
7. "The Way that He Sings" - 5:08
8. "What a Wonderful Man" - 2:59
9. "Off the Record" - 6:54
10. "Golden" - 4:51
11. "Lay Low" - 6:20

CD2

1. "Dondante" - 11:18
2. "Run Thru" - 9:35
3. "At Dawn" - 3:01
4. "Xmas Curtain" - 5:02
5. "O Is the One that Is Real" - 3:36 [play](#)
6. "I Think I'm Going to Hell" - 5:16
7. "Steam Engine" - 11:07
8. "Dancefloors" - 5:15
9. "Anytime" - 4:03
10. "Mahgeetah" - 7:08

Personnel:

- * Carl Broemel – guitar, pedal steel guitar, saxophone, vocals
- * Patrick Hallahan – drums
- * Jim James – vocals, guitar
- * Bo Koster – keyboards, vocals
- * "Two-Tone" Tommy – bass guitar

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A lot has been made of the Okonokos DVD, My Morning Jacket's live concert film, recorded at San Francisco's Fillmore Auditorium. The live performance DVD is so seductive and powerful because of the lush backdrop set and wonderfully immediate manner in which it was shot, as well as the music, yet the double-CD that accompanies it and the four-LP vinyl set on Badman Records seem to get scant attention. Sure, they're mentioned, but somehow just as geegaws to accompany the DVD. Wrong. It all comes down to the music, after all, and the Louisville, Kentucky, quintet get that big time. It's why the CD was issued first and the DVD came later. The DVD should be seen; it's gorgeous, it's wild and woolly and beautiful all at once. But Okonokos the CD is one hell of a live record. Certainly, since it was recorded on the tour for the incredibly successful album *Z*, it concentrates on a lot of the band's 2000s material. But they dig deep, too, and go back to 1999's "I Think I'm Going to Hell" from *The Tennessee Fire*, as well as "The Way That He Sings" and "It Still Moves" from 2001's *At Dawn*, and "I Will Sing You Songs" and "Mahgeetah" from the *It Still Moves* disc in 2003 to close the entire show. There have been references to Neil Young & Crazy Horse, in terms of how My Morning Jacket works as a band, but don't believe it. My Morning Jacket have the spontaneity and raw wiry energy to be sure -- they don't try to cover the flubs -- but they're infinitely tighter than those loud garage jobs who believe that playing slower than cough syrup with codeine is a virtue.

The sheer musicianship that My Morning Jacket put on display on this intense, diverse, and focused live show is rather astonishing. Sure, they know how to "jam" and could have blown the doors off most of the bands in that genre had they been dumb enough to go down that path. (One listen to the 11-minute "Dondante" is proof enough that they could have been the new Grateful Dead or some such creativity-killing notion.) Like England's Gomez, they're smart and weave everything into the mix of hooks, lyric flourishes, and power chords. They have the indie rock mantle prominently displayed but are as tight as U2 -- and, no, they don't sound like them. In fact, as the evidence here clearly displays, My Morning Jacket sound like no one but themselves. Frontman Jim James is as charismatic and self-effacing as they come. Guitarist (and also saxophonist) Carl Broemel is a lyrical monster, both as a fine melodic improviser and as a rock & roll lead guitar player. Listen to the way he handles "Gideon" and "Lowdown," and blows sax at the end of "Dondante." The three-piece rhythm section of Bo Koster's understated but emotionally and technically taut keyboards, Two-Tone Tommy's bass playing and baritone vocals, and drummer Patrick Hallahan's inventive spot in the pocket, are full of surprising twists and turns. Near the end of disc two, there's a drawling, dreamy, 11-minute "Steam Engine" (with all the solos) giving way to the stomping honky tonk rock of "Dancefloors" in a performance worthy of Lynyrd Skynyrd's *One More from the Road* -- the picture would be complete if the Band were included as guests. My Morning Jacket are a band at the pinnacle of their power. Like great jazz musicians, they've learned to instinctively play together and make the most of every number. "Mahgeetah" sends the whole trip out on a sweet note. The feel-good rhythm and bluesed-up country-rock groove pour out so naturally and transcendently that it's no surprise that the audience and band have bonded. Okonokos is one of the best live recordings of the 2000s. The DVD experience is a plus, and a welcome and aesthetically innovative one that adds depth and dimension to music played so soulfully and good-naturedly that it's almost

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impossible to think it could have been improved upon. Get both. ---Thom Jurek, AllMusic
Review

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