

D166 CEDAR RAPIDS, 3 APRIL 2000



Oh dear. What does "going through the motions" mean? Most commonly it means performing some action without real effort or conviction, but UK readers will know that, taken literally, it can also mean something more basic - specifically "wading through the ess-aitch-one-tee". Play the 110 minute [D166](#) and you'll see D and Co. do the one while you, the unfortunate viewer, must (at least, for as long as you persevere) endure the indignity of the other. As previous reviews have correctly stated, this DVD looks the part - clean, fresh-minted film in a pleasing palette of mutually-compatible pastel hues. The cameraman, way up in the balcony, is beyond comfortable zoom range - thus no really close shots - but his view is largely unobstructed (two exceptions - see below) and, once settled, all shakes and wobbles disappear. Sound is above average - though, beware, very close to the mike there's a young lady with an armour-piercing scream she's not averse to using* and if you listen through headphones be prepared to have the top of your skull taken cleanly off at least eleven times. The set-list, too, is full of promise - no Maggie's, H61, Silvio, CIB, no Watchtower, even - and things start well enough with a relaxed but perfectly pleasant acoustic work-out. But it never gets any better, never takes off, and when the warmest compliment you can pay is "pleasant" you know you're on a dead-man's curve, holding a losing hand, riding a fast train to Nowhere.



Maybe that's part of the problem. This leg of the NET has been travelling and will continue to travel through backwoods America, playing little places (plus one or two bigger ones) in Nevada, Idaho, Washington, Montana, Wyoming, the Dakotas, Nebraska. When D stands on stage and plaintively sings "I'm out here a thousand miles from my home" you sense it comes from the heart - though it's surely the only thing tonight that does. All through the show he remains subdued, doing his job, yes, and perfectly at ease, but phlegmatic, detached, no hint of commitment or conviction. Anyone who's watched a few of these DVDs will be familiar with the sight, on stages around the world, of sweat dripping and occasionally cascading off his beak and brow as he works his magic stuff - but I defy anyone to spot one drop tonight. And, as you might expect, his mood influences that of the band (or is Kemper *always* this pedestrian?) such that proceedings grow increasingly tame. LARS is so laid-back it's almost horizontal, as you might well be too should you make it this far. Not Fade Away is fake-intense - is Going Through The Motions. Most of this song as well as much of Rainy Day Women is blocked from our view by a black silhouette that squirms before the lens like a cheap 1970s Top Of The Pops visual effect. It hardly matters. When it's all finally over, D gives two perfunctory half-bows and saunters off back-stage. Another day, another dollar - but that nice, proper, all-in-a-line leavetaking you see elsewhere is notable tonight only by its absence. You'd almost think he didn't give a damn.



THANKS T

STARS Don't be seduced by the look of this DVD. It records in a visually attractive way a show of decidedly modest merit. Three.

* (For improved audio, see D166.su - wish I had!)