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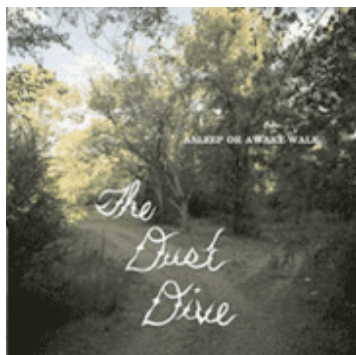
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The Dust Dive
Asleep or Awake Walk
Free103Point9

Format Reviewed: CD

Soundclip: "Daylight"



sounds so much like Camper Van Beethoven -- in the same year that CVB returned with one of the best albums of their career, no less -- is a wise move. It's hard to ignore the resemblance, but if you give *Asleep or Awake Walk* a chance, you'll discover a well-crafted and enjoyable album. And besides, until CVB came back, fans would have welcomed imitators this skilled -- even unintentional imitators -- with open arms.

David Lowery must be proud. It's not every day that a band records an album that sounds like your band -- and sounds almost as good. Surely The Dust Dive must know that paying homage to a band by blatantly co-opting their sound is unoriginal? Or maybe they don't hear the Camper Van Beethoven influence in their songs. Regardless, The Dust Dive obviously take their music seriously, and *Asleep or Awake Walk* asserts their talent. Musically, this is somber stuff -- The Dust Dive use mainly acoustic instruments (piano, guitars, violins) and mix in samples and field recordings -- birds chirping, etcetera. Add Bryan Zimmerman's brilliantly poetic lyrics, and you've got an effective, addictive combination.

☒ Still, it's tough to get past the band's similarities to CVB. Even Zimmerman's lyrics sometimes mirror Lowery's: "Olathe North Parking Lot"'s "Suzuki Samurais and Marlboro Lights" could be Lowery's "cigarettes and carrot juice", and lines like "'Friday night's just a silent scream / and this town is good at muffling" is vintage Lowery. However, despite the achingly repetitive "I'd Rather Not Know" ("I'd rather not know / what you're thinking") and the annoying dueling vocals on "Perkins Flag Is Getting Ragged" and "Sirens In The Park At 11", *Asleep or Awake Walk's* lo-fi qualities prove endearing. Listeners are forced to pay attention, and after a while it's tough to tune out.

☒ Oddly enough, some of *Asleep's* highlights come near the album's end. On "Daylight", the violin takes center stage while the vocals, as usual, are hidden behind a wall of effects. It's slow, acoustic, and beautiful -- further evidence of the Kansas-based band's Californian country influences. Listeners must ultimately ask themselves if The Dust Dive's choice to release an album that

-- David A. Cobb

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