



BOX SET

Dave Matthews Band Europe 2009

[Bama Rags/RCA]

"You are my obsession!" Dave Matthews sings during "Seven"—no

doubt taking the worshipful words right out of his one-track-minded audience's mouths. It will indeed take a certain kind of obsessive to spring for *Europe 2009*, a not-inexpensive four-disc set that uses one DVD to present a nearly three-hour London show from last summer, then spreads an even longer Italian gig across three CDs. It's a DMB devotee's dream and a jam-band hater's night terror. Or is it? This might actually be the set you'd put on—in small doses—to convince unbelievers. The group was touring behind (and playing nearly every track off) their best album to date, *Big Whiskey* and the *GrooGrux King*, a collection of extremely accessible, electric guitar-oriented, horn section-driven songs whose relative succinctness is maintained in these punchy arrangements. The economy of those pop-funk tunes is balanced out here, of course, by jams as un-succinct as a 21-minute expansion of oldie "#41." This might be considered heresy by acolytes of the core combo, but it's the supplementary members—guitar electrician Tim Reynolds, trumpeter Rashawn Ross, and the late LeRoi Moore's replacement on sax, Jeff Coffin—who push these shows into overdrive, especially at the all-but-orgasmic climax of "So Damn Lucky." It doesn't hurt that Matthews has progressed as a songwriter since trademarking his deceptively happy-go-lucky sound of the mid-'90s, adding more tension, sensuality and genuine celebration to the recent material emphasized in these epic sets. —CW

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- *M Music & Musicians*

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