

Lumbard is amazing live

Look at it this way: Rob Lumbard's cassette-only release was a first step. Last year's CD, "Pigcicle" offered vastly better sound and a more serious look at a seriously talented local guitarist.

"Live at Flanagan's" is Lumbard in his element. Recorded in February at the Ingersoll Avenue restaurant and bar, "Live" presents Lumbard as "just" a barroom entertainer, a guy who sings songs for people while they drink beer. But he's a pretty great barroom singer — gets the crowd laughing, encourages good tips for the waitrons, etc.

Every fan has his or her own favorite Lumbard set list, and quibbles about the selection here are inevitable. Lumbard's own "Snip Snip," "Crazy Little Girl" and "Casa Bella" are mandatory, but why not more blues? OK, so Muddy Waters' "I Can't be Satisfied" is here, as it should be, there's the traditional "Hesitation Blues," but . . . Also, how come only 38 minutes worth of stuff comes out of an entire night's recording? Granted, "Live" isn't going to run you the \$17.99 the major labels are charging for some new releases, but one wishes he'd tossed on a few more tunes.



"Live at Flanagan's"

Rob Lumbard (Hot Fudge Records, P.O. Box 14, Cedar Falls, IA 50613)

Rated: ★★★★★

Those are minor irritants, and this thing is too much fun to dwell on such things. Lumbard clearly is preaching to the choir here — and a pretty well-lubricated choir, at that: "Somebody yell out 'Free Bird' one more time!" he says, and the crowd does with gusto. But that just adds to the fun. Many people in this town love the guy, and a bunch of them were there that night in February.

— Patrick Beach