

# Freak Scene Just Can't Believe Us

20 years later, Dinosaur Jr. still rules.

It's hard to believe 20 years have passed since J Mascis, Lou Barlow and Emmett Patrick "Murph" Murphy started the sonic boom heard 'round the world that became known as Dinosaur Jr. Barlow and Mascis, friends from Amherst, Mass., originally formed a band called Deep Wound, a hardcore group which found Mascis leading the drum beat of rebellion. They quickly tired of the formulaic nature of hardcore, Mascis swapped his drumsticks for guitar picks and the rest, as they say, is musical history.

Mascis plugged in, amped up and let the guitar take over his world. He's a tour de force guitar shredder without the wankery or affectations of the modern day guitar hero, and his voice often sounds like he's barely awake. It was all part of the geeky appeal of this band that made making melodic, emotional but hard-rocking music seem effortless. The three chums sported bedhead hair, jeans and flannel years before the Seattle crowd would become famous for it. And without even



**Dinosaur Jr. (pictured), Priestess, Dan Jones & The Squids**  
 9 pm, Tuesday, 4/18 • WOW Hall  
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trying, Mascis set a new standard for guitar rock that still holds today.

When the band was new, there was no way to categorize their textured noise,

and they blew people away with the guitar washing over everything in waves of fuzz and distortion. They sometimes mumbled, sometimes howled. They were

loud. They followed no song structure. They were lo-fi nerds in a sinister world, and never reached the heights of success they should have.

As is wont to happen when two creative minds share the same mental space, tensions between Mascis and Barlow ran high. Barlow was publicly and messily canned from the band and went on to success with Sebadoh, but not before Dinosaur Jr. released three acclaimed albums, 1985's *Dinosaur* (on Homestead Records), 1987's *You're Living All Over Me* (on SST) and 1988's *Bug* (also on SST). Later, Dinosaur Jr. became essentially Mascis' pseudonym; as songwriter and primary instrumentalist he produced 1991's fantastic *Green Mind* and 1993's *Where You Been*; and went on to other work with his band The Fog, but that's a whole 'nother article.

Fans of Dinosaur Jr. will be pleased to know that Mascis regained the rights to those first three influential albums, and reissued them on Merge Records in March 2005, timed to coincide with the announcement that the original lineup would regroup. Incidentally, Rhino Records has a "best of" Dino CD and has plans to reissue *Green Mind* and *Where You Been*. **EW**

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