

Brainwashed - Majical Cloudz, "Wait & See"

Written by Gary Suarez

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This drab duo first emerged a few years back as bloodless hipster darlings, their aptly-titled 2013 Matador debut *Impersonator* overflowing with the sort of sentiments one might encounter in the first half of an Abilify commercial. Given frontman Devon Welsh's incidental familial connection to the world of Twin Peaks, it's mildly amusing how much of his gloomy music with Matthew Otto recalls Julee Cruise's songs, albeit ones hastily covered by Coldplay.

[Matador](#)

Still, Majical Cloudz successfully toe-tapped into the zeitgeist, endearing themselves to conflicted millennial souls who casually brand themselves online with depressive viral non sequiturs and pseudo-sadness hashtags. Their fanbase has grown with critical acclaim and related benefaction, leading to key festival placements, studio time with Grimes, and some opening tour dates with fellow melodrama marauder Lorde. On the eve of a new North American tour, they took a commercial cue from fellow Canuck Drake and dropped *Wait & See*, a brief odds-and-sods set of studio outtakes from the sessions for last year's *Are You Alone?*

. Why these tracks didn't make the cut the first time around is beyond me, though a shrewd marketer understands the importance of leaving fans wanting more--and then selling it to them.

As has become unsettlingly par for the course, Majical Cloudz remain thoroughly mired in microcosmic bringdown. Neither Otto nor Welsh demonstrate their value as songwriters or sound designers here, whether listlessly miming Joy Division on "Heaven" or limping through the emotional gauntlet of "Pretty." Placed four songs in, the latter contains a couple of prodding lyrical gotchas for those who hadn't drifted off to sleep just yet. For a group credited by some with conveying such complex emotions, Welsh's words mostly come across spartan and simplistic, something that proves ever more detrimental when he presents them in a sappy sing-song manner. Case in point, the title track betrays the intended heady conceit of Otto's backwards-replayed strings by Welsh's facile vocal delivery. An attempt at sanguinity, closer "My Heart Soaks Up Every Drop Of Your Blood" showcases just how closely Walsh can mimic Chris Martin. Taking a backseat, Otto accents a fairly basic and muted drone with a rote piano motif, permitting his cohort to croon away in his apparently limited register.

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By the very end of *Wait & See*, their pop aspirations become painfully evident, and in turn, downright embarrassing. At best, Majical Cloudz remain a karaoke-level lounge act deceived into thinking their originals are anything more than tearjerking folly. Their bargain basement Adele schtick would be a lot more convincing if any of it felt honest. And honestly, none of it does.