

## Brainwashed - Lab Waste, "Zwarte Achtegrond"

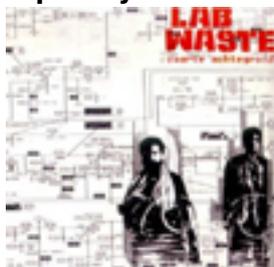
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Lab Waste, the nom de collaboration of Los Angelesans Thavius Beck and Subtitle, have mated the rap set with the digital age on their oddly titled full length debut, *Zwarte Achtegrond* ("Black Background" in Dutch). Appropriately modern, to make their music they eschew two turntables and a microphone for two Apple G3s and a veritable shopping list of samplers, mixers and gadgets that would be the drooling envy of any A/V club.

### Temporary Whatever



The resultant electronic influence is so heavy that the instrumentation is barely categorizable as "hip hop"—rapid fire hi hats slogging through dense but pedestrian sounds last heard on the *Doom* soundtrack alternating with something Kraftwerk might have done on the Euro club scene had they worked 30 years later (maybe the title is relevant, or deliberately misconceiving?). The lyrics are at their core well done. Intelligent enough, as complex couplets ("to the detriment of many a derelict/ we come to inject a bit of intellectual impulse/ set to a beat to offset the inimical complaints of the ignorant"), and cerebral syllogisms fly by the ears at a frenetic pace. Being bombarded by heavily distorted voices waxing futuristic over the fate of humanity provides a bit of ironic relief too. But the combination of heavy effects and light-speed pace make the lyrics, a key component of any rap record, all but indecipherable.

The instrumentation makes *Zwarte Achtegrond* too gratingly artificial for a hip hop aficionado, and the dizzyingly difficult rapping will distract all but the most dedicated electronic head, potentially alienating both sides of the would-be crossover. The formula clicks just once, with "Get the Signal," a fast paced energetic thumper most notable for its simplicity. On the whole Lab Waste seems to have forgotten an essential ingredient in any hip-hop album, unforgivable if they do portend to have a ";

### *Zwarte Achtegrond*

";: there's no soul. Put together with double clicks, and without a single turntable, the album lacks nearly all vestiges of human involvement, a vital element of the hip hop aesthetic. The feel is cold and disconnected, which is probably the point. As a bleak concept album bemoaning the future, then,

### *Zwarte Achtegrond*

might succeed on some level, but it's not enough to save it from being a tedious genre experiment, mired in confused mediocrity.

samples:

- [Dope Beat \(or something\)](#)
- [Get the Signal](#)
- [Internal Psi Sci Ence](#)