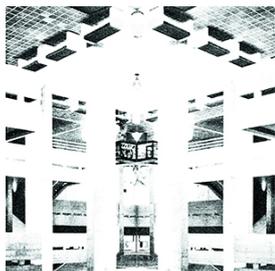


## Brainwashed - Brutalism, "The Charged Void"

Written by Creag Dunton

Sunday, 21 July 2019 11:18 - Last Updated Sunday, 21 July 2019 20:28

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In stark contrast to his role in *The Holy Circle*, Terence Hannum's Brutalism project clearly draws from noise and black metal, but the end product is distinctly different. The fact that the name is referencing his interest in Brutalist architecture and not the violence associated with various metal genres makes it clear that he is not aping genre clichés but instead using some of those signifiers to create something entirely fresh with *The Charged Void*.

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Manning guitar, bass, organ, drum machine, and vocals, it is obvious Hannum is going for the one man band ethos for *The Charged Void*, and certain elements of the production carry that same influence. The emphasis on the middle and high frequencies give the album that traditional lo-fi sensibility, but with added depth not usually found in black metal. This is very well recorded however, not the "microcassette recorder running in the bathroom above the basement rehearsal space" sound of so many of these records. Yes, the music is chaotic and it can be difficult to discern instruments at times, but there is still an excellent sense of complexity to the overall arrangements.

Hannum also does an exemplary job at capturing the hidden melodies that often appear below the murk on these recordings, but giving them a bit more space. There is a wall of nasty, noisy distortion throughout "Fervent Avoidance of All Light" that is punctuated with hollow drum machine and his demonic screams, but there is an organ melody that still manages to shine through. The same holds true for "Stairs Turn Inward Toward Oblique Shadows," where menacing spaces and ghostly howls open things up, but a funeral organ dirge becomes the focus.

At other times the overall feeling is more electronic in nature even if Hannum is using mostly organic instrumentation on *The Charged Void*. Droning melodies appear deep down on "Infinite Sequence of Extended Spaces," but the song is overall much more about the heavy distortion and ugly vocals. There are tones drifting through all of the cacophonous blasts and feedback,

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but they are mostly masked by the shrillness and jarring outbursts of harsher sounds and vocals.

The lengthy conclusion "The Grid-Like Mass" ties everything together brilliantly. Ghostly whispers and morose electronic-tinged layers lead things off in a slow, dramatic opening. Soon everything erupts into a dense wall of noise, but all the varying layers and sounds are discernible, never just blurring together into a monochromatic murk. Vocals echo throughout, and clear organ melodies snake through, casting the whole composition into a bit of haunted house ambience.

Having followed much of Terence Hannum's work since the earlier days of Locrian, I have always appreciated the way in which he subverts genres. For example, Locrian's perversion of metal and prog rock, The Holy Circle's unique take on synth pop, and the staunchly antifascist power electronics of Axebreaker being just a few. Admittedly I am not the biggest fan of black metal in its traditional forms, but I can easily appreciate how, with Brutalism, he is building from those components associated with the genre but casting them into a new and differing context, making for yet another unique project in an already impressive resume full of them.

[Samples Available Here](#)