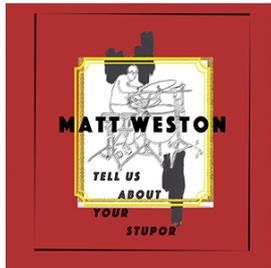


Brainwashed - Matt Weston, "Tell Us About Your Stupor"

Written by Craig Dunton

Sunday, 17 May 2020 12:42 - Last Updated Sunday, 17 May 2020 13:28



With *A New Form of Crime* coming out last fall, and a new double LP on the horizon, Matt Weston has been prolific as of late. One thing that sets *Tell Us About Your Stupor*

apart from these other albums, however, is that it is a live recording, although that of an installation project rather than a traditional concert setting. That is an important distinction to make because, having seen Weston perform on multiple occasions, the live experience is a significantly different animal, and that is clearly captured here. As an installation, it would seem that this is more of a live performance augmented by other instruments or recordings rather than a purely live, solo recording, but it has an exceptional balance between live Weston and studio Weston.

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While attending a Matt Weston performance with a friend of mine, my friend (who is not well versed in experimental or avant garde type music) remarked that "he plays the drums wrong." Not in a demeaning sense, but succinctly summarizing Weston's live approach. Sure, there is usually a traditional drum kit set up, with some additional found objects scattered about, but with Weston's (mis)use of the instrument is what makes his work so unique. His rapid fire playing, heavily informed by free jazz and improvisation, rarely hits the drums in the conventional sense, but instead he focuses on the sides of the drums themselves, the stands on which they are set up, objects he has placed on them, etc.

The recent studio albums from Weston have been centered largely around electronics and processing and while drums often could be heard, they were never the focus, nor did they have the intensity of his performances. Here, however, that comes through a bit more clearly. The first side, "Don't Yell or Hit," opens with classic live Weston sounds. Erratic (though structured) drum sounds and various rattling objects cut through, with the occasional tympani outburst to punctuate things nicely. It is not solely drums and percussion to be heard, however. Electronics appear throughout, sometimes mimicking pained horns, other times being nice, noisy additions to flesh out the sound. To this he adds a myriad of skittering junk, bells, bird calls, etc., resulting in a work that is intensely chaotic, but carefully considered and improvised

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in the classic sense.

On the other side, "Stop With The Brushing" opens with a noise that could either be a synthesizer burst or horn squelching, with some processed voices thrown in for good measure. Weston punctuates this with deep, heavy drum thuds, metallic clanging, and the occasional outburst of found sound clatter, but compared to the A side there is a bit more breathing room to be had. Overall, however, it is a darker feeling work, however, with an emphasis on lower registers and heavily uses of reverb, with shimmering, serrated electronics cutting through.

One of the things I greatly appreciate about *Tell Us About Your Stupor* is how Matt Weston is able to clearly present both his stripped-down percussion live work and his electronic experiments together. His studio records are all exceptional, and I am very eager to hear the new one he is working on, but I also love his pure percussion excursions as well. It may not have the same impact as seeing him perform live, but it is an acceptable approximation, especially in this current time where it is questionable when the next show will be performed anywhere. I imagine this is going to be an excellent companion work to his new material, but it also stands quite well on its own.

[Samples Available Here.](#)