

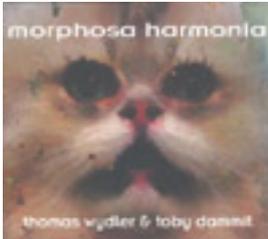
Brainwashed - THOMAS WYDLER & TOBY DAMMIT, "MORPHOSA HARMONIA"

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Toby Dammit has played drums for Iggy Pop, Swans, The Residents and Mark Eitzel, to name a few. He is also the creator of 2001's *Top Dollar*, a solo percussion album that took Hal Blaine's *Psychedelic Percussion* to its logical (and utterly absurd) extreme. Thomas Wydler is the drummer for The Bad Seeds and formerly of Die Haut.

[Hit Thing](#)



For the meeting of these two master percussionists, one could be forgiven for expecting an album composed equally of competitive drum solos or hippie rhythm circle music. What Wydler and Dammit do instead is create a varied album of exotic pop instrumentals that neatly defies any easy categorization. While *Morphosa Harmonia* is undoubtedly and unashamedly heavy on the percussive side of things, Thomas and Toby also tackle Buchla synthesizers, vibraphones, electric piano and bass. Contributions from guest players Jochen Arbeit (of Einsturzende Neubauten), Chris Hahn (of Angels of Light), Martin Peter (of Die Haut) and Beate Bartel (of Liaisons Dangereuses) add further layers of compositional complexity to the album. The album's title gives a substantial clue as to the sort of sound Wydler and Dammit are aiming for; the krautrock of *Musik Von Harmonia* and the Cluster & Eno albums is clearly evoked in the album's floating, psychedelic atmospheres. In fact, the pair even recruited Ingo Krauss, the engineer from Conny Plank's legendary studio, to mix this album. Perhaps because drummers are often the most maligned member of any given band and frequently the most ignored element of rock music, Toby Dammit opts to place the percussion of utmost primacy in his music, forcing the rest of the elements to follow the lead of the drums, cymbals, gongs and bells. As a listener, I was placed right next to the drum set, a unique perspective from which to experience this collection of chugging psychedelic pop songs. Most of the tracks on the album are eclectic and whimsical, combining Martin Denny's high-fidelity exotica with Ennio Morricone's kitchen sink compositional style. Each track is built from the rhythm down, with eerie birdcalls, chants and synthesized choirs weaving in and out of the beats. Canny use of echo, reverb and phasing keep the album in a constant state of dreamy psychedelia, adding bong hits to bongos, as it were. The packaging is an intriguing mystery, filled with watercolors of cats and nude females. (Kitties and titties? Pussies and pussycats?) Whatever the intention was, it's a suitably odd juxtaposition for a fun and goofy little album that quietly pushes the boundaries of percussion-based music.

samples:

- [Ramwong](#)
- [The Great Lie](#)
- [Mr. Knock Up](#)