

Brainwashed - Manual, "Bajamar"

Written by Jon Whitney
Sunday, 21 May 2006 11:22 -



Jonas Munk is a talented musician, producer, and texturalist. As Manual, his recordings are warm, the guitar hums are deep, and the sounds of waves and wind chimes are dreamy and picturesque like a summer day on the beach with the hot sun beating down and a cool, cleansing sea breeze gently passing through. All it needs, however is a hook.

[Darla](#)

Although I enjoy his latest album I feel I've heard it before. Almost like a continuation of *The North Shore*

, Munk's using the same chords he's comfortable with, there are no beats, no drums, and no rhythms, just the wash of finely processed guitars with sound effects layered on top. What makes

Bajamar

different is that it is more patient than the other Manual albums: it has a brief intro and outro with three +10 minute pieces in the center which take their time evolving and flowing. I actually prefer this over the releases with 10 or more songs that are shorter and less developed.

"Celebration" is the first full song to appear. Synth and vocal samples washing over a continuous guitar tinkling which would be the sound light makes when reflecting off the water. "Reminiscence," on the other hand, actually includes water recordings over more muted drones, while the stringed instruments in the 15+ minute "September Swell" echo as wind chimes and quiet percussive sounds shudder softly over. The closing "La Torche" is like a coda to "September Swell," as it starts without any defining beginning point, and while it features a more prominent, Cocteau Twins-like rhythmic guitar tune, it uses some of the same sounds carried over from "September Swell."

While these songs are nice, to be honest, I'd expect to find any one of them to play the role of an incidental piece: transitional songs to be sandwiched in between those far more grand and involved. There isn't much challenging nor exciting enough to attract me back like moments on

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Ascend

or

Until Tomorrow

had. My longing for a lead instrument reminds me, too, that the more I hear from Manual, the more I ache for another Limp recording to surface. It's clear that Jonas Munk is building brand recognition with the covers and the sound, but it's all sounding and looking alike at this point.

samples:

- [Celebration](#)
- [Reminiscence](#)
- [La Torche](#)