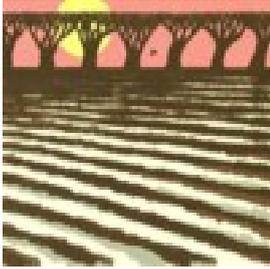


## Brainwashed - Shogun Kunitoki, "Tasankokaiku"

Written by Matthew Amundsen

Thursday, 25 May 2006 19:00 - Last Updated Tuesday, 08 February 2011 23:12

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This is the debut release from a quartet out of Helsinki who play buoyant instrumental electronic music. Swift and without a beat, the songs are like rushing rivers of tones and simple patterns. Since there aren't necessarily any new sounds or styles to be found here, the songs are carried more by the band's sheer exuberance.

### [Fonal](#)

It's easy to hear their self-professed admiration for the early minimalist composers from the very first track, "Montezuma." A motif is repeated while other instruments join in the flow at mostly dramatic moments, darting in and out of, playing around with, commenting on, or sometimes even restating the theme. This is more or less the blueprint for every song, and their love for the early minimalists is unfortunately their biggest limitation.

I couldn't help but feel that most of these songs don't really go anywhere, and whatever message they're trying to convey varies little from song to song. Which isn't to say that there aren't some notable moments, because there certainly are. "Tropiikin Kuuma Huuma" contains some marvelous glissandi, while "Daniel" has some effective panned washes that phase in and out of the mix. My favorite track, "Tulevaisuus-menneisyys=1," has one particular line that sounds backwards or else somehow broken, and is a nice change of pace. Likewise, "Piste" has a strange little textural element panned hard right, sounding almost like bells, but the very note on which the song, and the album, ends is almost too cute and smug for my taste.

The group avoids the icy sound of pure digital music by playing on analog electronics, yet there still exists a distance that sometimes relegates this album to background music. Their non-academic approach to minimalism could have been liberating, but instead anchors them too closely to their idols. The band can obviously play well together, now I'd like to hear them branch out with their songwriting and find a voice truly their own.

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samples:

- [Montezuma](#)
- [Tulevaisuus-menneisyys=1](#)
- [Piste](#)