

## Brainwashed - Tyondai Braxton, "History That Has No Effect"

Written by Nate Smith

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Tyondai Braxton has an intimate relationship with his guitar pedals. Every sound Braxton makes on this CD - primarily using guitar and voice - is processed through various combinations of a bevy of effects. The nine tracks on this disc are surprisingly diverse, and I imagine there's a good deal of improvisation going on.

[JMZ Records](#)

The first three tracks use only voice and guitar pedals, but you wouldn't know it - "(A Sentence Worth a Thousand Words) Great Mass" is a dense atmospheric soundscape and "Light Pitch Black, I'm Gonna Start Shining Bright!!!" is beat-heavy minimal electronica (probably the most impressive use of beat-boxing in a long time). A disc full of these voice experiments would still be interesting, but things quickly take a turn as the guitar becomes a focal instrument: there's the anthemic post-rock of "Raise Yr Arms & Cross Them", featuring a violist and cellist, and then there's the excellent "The Violent Light Through Falling Shards," where Braxton's guitar stirs up echoes of Charles Bullen over beat-boxed industrial beats and siren-like noise.

In fact, the entire disc is reminiscent of This Heat, not so much in sound (though at times the comparison can be made), but in application; Braxton's hands-on computerless approach to making layered music reflects This Heat's experiments using traditional instruments combined with the live manipulation of tape loops. The final two tracks on the album feature Braxton's singing, a voice that at times almost sounds like (dare I say it) Peter Gabriel. Of these two tracks, "Struck Everywhere" is particularly engaging: a 10-minute, free-flowing melodic piece bedded on a ride cymbal loop. This disc pretty accurately replicates Braxton's live show, where he sits on the floor with a guitar and mic in the middle of a sea of wires, constantly playing, singing, and fiddling with his pedals. He's definitely got it down to an art, as I'm pretty sure all his sounds are created on the spot, with no samples. I wouldn't be surprised if most or all of the intensely-layered tracks on this disc were done in one take without overdubs.

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It's really an impressive disc.