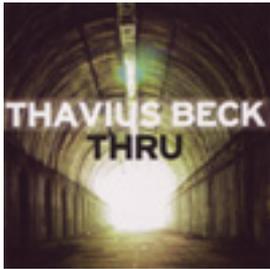# Brainwashed - Thavius Beck, "Thru"

Written by Matthew Jeanes
Saturday, 07 October 2006 16:00 - Last Updated Sunday, 08 October 2006 02:15

With an impressive cast of characters including 2Mex, Saul Williams, and Mia Doi Todd, Thavius Beck's newest record charts a few different paths but manages to carve out a unique path for the LA-based producer. I was a fan of Thavius Beck's last record for Mush, but *Thru* is even stronger and stranger.

[Mush](#)

Beck's choice of collaborators is telling about his approach to music. Nocando's rhyme on "98" is hard to listen to, deeply personal and honest, but it's the kind of track that I wish more people would try to make within the context of a hip hop record. Mia Doi Todd's voice loops and blends with samples over a beautiful but broken downtempo number while Saul Williams adds more gravitas to an album that's already aiming to be a seriously considered journey rather than a collection of pop songs.

Even the instrumental tracks here sing with a resonantly personal touch. Beck swings back and forth between sample hungry hip hop tracks and songs that exist outside of any tightly constrained vision of a genre. Music like this almost always tends to be a reflection of someone creating out of a need to express rather than a need to move units at the local shop. Of course that means that records like *Thru* often have a difficult time connecting with the people whose jobs are to market, sell, promote, and distribute music, but paradoxically these same records are usually the ones that connect the deepest with individual listeners who feel what an artist is trying to say.

Thru is a pretty dark journey, but not one that dwells on or ever feels weighted down by its own themes. This could easily be the kind of record that gets people who typically dismiss hip hop and electronic music as glossy, vacant, or superficial to rethink that position.

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samples:

- [Reaching](#)
- [Under Pressure](#)
- [98](#)