

Brainwashed - Nurse With Wound, "Creakiness and Other Misdemeanours"

Written by John Kealy

Sunday, 04 March 2012 17:04 - Last Updated Sunday, 04 March 2012 21:40



This strange mix of early '90s work and more recent material, showcases some of the many moods of Steve Stapleton. Classic cut-and-paste insanity from Nurse With Wound's middle period has been paired with some of Stapleton's powerful ambient vocal pieces from the last few years. This compilation does not make much sense on paper and perhaps is a little misguided in terms of its scope but it does sound brilliant from every angle.

[United Jnana](#)

Considering *Creakiness* was originally a split with the group Spasm, it would have been nice to have the original split LP back in print especially considering the Spasm side was produced by Stapleton. Regrettably the Spasm material has been left off this collection and only the Nurse With Wound material is included (and the NWW side has been in print since the split LP on *Sugar Fish Drink*

). It would be great if there were plans to reissue Spasm's contribution along with their *Meating Disorder* EP if anyone out there is reading this who can make it happen.

However, regarding the material that is actually on this disc, "Creakiness" is a classic piece of Nursey collage work that does deserve the reissue. Disorientating ambience gives way to a whirlwind of *Looney Tunes* sound effects such as Roadrunner and Porky Pig. While this oddness is entertaining on its own, it's when Stapleton takes the chaotic mass of sound and suddenly loops what sounds a pinball machine to form a terrific beat. It is possible to hear how Stapleton would work this hard rhythmic structure onto his next work, 1992's

Thunder Perfect Mind

. "Creakiness" is a lot more forgiving than

Thunder Perfect Mind

, combining the whimsical with the rigorously alienating.

Strangely, the rest of the compilation jumps forward over ten years in time to cover material

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from mid-2000s, in particular recordings from the *Echo Poeme Sequence* sessions. However, the *Echo Poeme Sequence* pieces are strangely incomplete; why parts one and three are included but not complemented with part two (which altogether would have made a great release on its own) is beyond me. That said, the parts included here are the most difficult to find (one was a limited edition 7" and the other was a free CD-R given to members of the audience of the *Salt Marie Celeste* shows in Vienna) so at least there is some sense to including them on this compilation.

[My main criticism of the two parts of "Sand Tangled Women"](#) (the third in the *Echo Poeme Sequence*) still stands; the pieces develop nicely to a point but I feel they end prematurely and leave the pieces in limbo. Yet this release is a major improvement over the 7" in that the music here sounds perfect. The original 7" pressing was awful, pressing problems had persisted throughout its production and the final product was adequate at best. "Little Dipper Minus Two" on the other hand, remains one of Stapleton's modern classics. The piece develops beautifully over time and spreads its tendrils like a dream in a sleeping mind. The two female voices which seem to be both addressing each other and no one bring to mind the washer women of *Finnegans Wake* who respectively turn into a stone and a tree. That same illogical logic is at play here, human forms drifting into matters and matter beyond the norm as their voices warp into resonances à la Alvin Lucier.

The compilation finishes with one of the two tracks from the *Having Fun with the Prince of Darkness* 7" from 2004. "A Perfectly Natural Explanation" (originally "...Expectation" on the 7") was originally paired with a remix of "Penis Fruit Loop" but that remix has been omitted. While "A Perfectly Natural Explanation" is good but does not really fit, it veers closest to "Creakiness" but not sufficiently so for it to feel like anything apart from filler (although that's easy to say when I already own the single).

On one hand, the music is great and deserving of a reissue. On the other, the track listing is bizarre and I feel that perhaps an expanded reissue of the *Sugar Fish Drink* compilation and an *Echo Poeme Sequence* box set would be more apt. However, it's not in Stapleton's *modus operandi* to conform to expectations so perhaps this compilation is as much of a Nurse With Wound statement as the sonic material itself.

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samples:

- [Creakiness](#)
- [Little Dipper Minus Two \(Echo Poeme Sequence 1\)](#)
- [A Perfectly Natural Explanation](#)