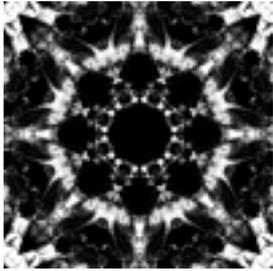


Brainwashed - Sky Burial, "There I Saw the Grey Wolf Gaping"

Written by Creag Dunton

Sunday, 21 October 2012 13:59 - Last Updated Monday, 22 October 2012 01:42



Following three albums worth of long-form drone pieces, Michael Page (Fire in the Head) has instead returned with a suite of more song-like compositions, with a slew of collaborators, including Jarboe and Danny Hyde. The final product is a diverse, yet cohesive set of tracks that function exactly how an album should.

[Small Doses](#) /First Light

It is perhaps due to this diverse group of contributors that the album comes across as the most varied I have yet heard from Page. His penchant for elongated, dark ambient pieces is never far from view: even though it is more of a traditional album, three tracks still clock in at over the ten minute mark. The solo pieces, "Shedding the Husk" and "Bone to Beak (The Vultures Speak)" are indeed most in-line with his previous discography, the former especially being a slow-build horror piece of dramatic strings and noisy percussion, rising to an almost ambient peak before falling into brilliant static-heavy industrial banging.

Opener "Incantare" features both Jarboe and Troum, and both make their contributions quite clear. Troum's drone expertise is clearly present in the form of echoy reverb and dense, swirling electronics, but balanced out by processed excerpts of Jarboe's voice, understated and effective. Page, however, is the person who pulls it all together in a complex, constantly evolving composition.

Danny Hyde's contributions, "Carne[va]" and "Fools Circl 9wys" seem to be solo works, and stand out as sounding pretty significantly different than the rest of the album. Both are lo-fi stuttering collages of voice fragments and unidentifiable electronics. The former certainly embraces that carnival music vibe hinted at the title, in the form of dark pseudo-melodies that eventually fall into a chaotic digital noise fest at the end, while the latter ends up going for a more rhythmic structure.

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The biggest departure is on "Beyond the Veldt", featuring former Hawkwind vocalist Bridget Wishart (coincidentally Nik Turner was a guest on last year's *Aegri Somnia*). The heavy reverb and electronic passages are shaped into a melancholy melody, with a stiff drum machine and Wishart's voice concocting a unique take on a gothic shoegazey piece of music. For me, it is this perversion of conventionality that makes it the centerpiece of a great album.

Previous Sky Burial albums have always been exceptional pieces of dark ambient experimentation and drift, but *There I Saw the Grey Wolf Gaping* pulls those pieces together into what comes across as a more fully realized album. It is no slight against those previous works, but here it just all comes together exceptionally well.

samples:

- [Incantare](#)
- [Carne\[val\]](#)
- [Beyond the Veldt](#)