

## Brainwashed - Bob Bellerue, "All In"

Written by Creag Dunton

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Although has a lengthy career, Brooklyn's Bob Bellerue has sat comfortably in the fringes of a fragmented noise and experimental scene. His newest release, *All In*, is a nicely limited tape edition that captures two distinctly different performances, one from 2011 and the other from 2014, which features him emphasizing some notably different styles from his body of work, although the final product makes for an entirely cohesive release that feels as much as a conceptual album as it would a set of two live performances three years apart.

### [Anarchymoon](#)

The first half of this tape, "Redglaer @ Port D'Or 02/19/11" is the more overtly noise oriented of the two performances. Right from the opening moments he makes this clear: an abstract mechanical clatter is soon shaped into a violent, distorted buzz that at least superficially sounds like the work of an entire tabletop of guitar pedals. Throughout this, Bellerue maintains the noise standard of overdriven crunchy bass frequencies and shrill, barely regulated feedback even as he changes things up.

While it is unrelenting, he clearly has some control over this seemingly chaotic mass of sound, shifting frequencies and densities the whole time keeping things fresh and dynamic throughout. Heavy white noise washes precede sputtering, dying airplane engines and, as the piece goes on, he seems to struggle as to if he cannot decide if he prefers to emphasize the pummeling low end scrape or the shrill, brittle static. By the end the latter seems to win out, with him concluding the piece (and performance) via piercing feedback and painful, grinding power saws.

On the other half of the tape, "Blessed Thistle @ Babycastles 07/05/14" is a different Bellerue, at least at first. The heavy noise is more of a seasoning than a main course, as the first few minutes are dedicated to an idiosyncratic vibraphone like rhythmic passage that extends for a while, demonstrating more calm and restraint than the other half. There is a greater sense of peace at this point, but it is obvious that the harsher stuff is looming just beneath the surface.

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Of course, this soon explodes outward, and the full on ripping, pulsating distortion and noise explodes to the surface. Again, his performance is exceptionally dynamic, blending the sustained noise outbursts together and cutting them up into aggressive, harsh stammering patterns. As it goes on, he adds more and more elements, like what sounds like digitally mangled voices, immense warning sirens, and explosive blasts to a mix that becomes denser and heavier until collapsing under its own weight and ending the piece with a jarring abruptness.

*All In* captures two different sides of Bob Bellerue: the side that has a strong focus on complex sound art structures, and the side that relishes the result of cranking a gain knob up as high as it goes and appreciating the ugliness that results. I think that, given this is a pair of live performances, the latter half of his style ends up being the dominant one, but that is not to say it is not a well rounded release. Instead these two different disciplines meld together nicely and, with his ability to keep things dynamic and moving, pushes it beyond being just another noise cassette.

samples:

- [Redglaer](#)
- [Blessed Thistle \(Excerpt One\)](#)
- [Blessed Thistle \(Excerpt Two\)](#)