

Brainwashed - M Ax Noi Mach, "Raw Elements: 1999-2009"

Written by Creag Dunton

Sunday, 02 August 2015 13:55 - Last Updated Sunday, 02 August 2015 19:49



M AX NOI MACH
RAW ELEMENTS: 1999 - 2009

Too structured to be labeled noise, yet too dissonant to fit into any other genre, Robert Francisco's work as M Ax Noi Mach is an idiosyncratic project in the best possible way. On this collection of four track recordings over the span of a decade, guitar pedal feedback loops are set immediately next to skittering 808 hi-hat cymbals, defying categorization and being extremely memorable for just that reason. Clocking in at 22 songs and over 70 minutes, it is a daunting yet rewarding collection.

[Handmade Beats](#)

Francisco's output often does feature many of the noise scene's hallmarks: feedback, low fidelity distortion, bizarre tape loops, and so forth, but it is how he structures and assembles these elements is what sets his work apart. Songs such as "Swarm" and "Cut Yourself" are heavily built on loops of indeterminate and blown out noise, but he assembles them into a taut, repetitive structure that is more befitting of minimalist techno. At his harshest there is some kinship with Pain Jerk's more structured works, but with far less chaos.

Screamed vocal passages, another consistent noise trait, also appear throughout these pieces. The aforementioned "Cut Yourself" and "The Big Baby" feature harsh and aggressive shouts, intelligible but placed at a comfortable level in the mix to not overshadow anything else. "Intellectual Superiority" is one of the points where noise seems to overtake structure, largely driven by a raw, heavy engine like synth line.

The pieces where Francisco emphasizes drum machine beats are the ones that resounded most strongly with me. A song such as "Bass Murder" may be based around a relatively simple bit drum programming, but the overdrive on the kick drums, and the way he shifts the piece from order to chaos is accomplished so exceptionally well. "Chaser" has a hint of distortion on the beats, but not overly so. Blended with a nastier synth lead, it results in a delightfully ugly piece of music.

Brainwashed - M Ax Noi Mach, "Raw Elements: 1999-2009"

Written by Creag Dunton

Sunday, 02 August 2015 13:55 - Last Updated Sunday, 02 August 2015 19:49

The latter half of the disc is where Francisco goes in some distinctly different and unexpected directions. The first half may feel thematically linked and consistent, but "RM04" throws in what sounds like sampled reggaeton loops and weird oscillator passages that are eventually devoured by a drum machine that becomes more and more destructive. "Pain", besides having a comparably rather clean sounding production, and with its odd fragmented melody it feels like a deconstructed chopped and screwed take on mid 1990s hip hop.

The second half may feature some of the disc's odder moments, but as a whole *Raw Elements* hangs together more cohesively than I would have expected from a decade of four track tape experiments. Of course there are some parallels that can be drawn to other artists, but make no mistake, this is the result of Robert Francisco's singular vision. Strong rhythms, crunchy noise, and big beats come together in a gripping and powerful release.

samples:

- [Bass Murder](#)
- [Cut Yourself](#)
- [Pain](#)