

Brainwashed - GNOD and João Pais Filipe, “Faca de Fogo”

Written by Eve McGivern

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GNOD has made a career—a lifestyle—as a creative collective of musicians that weave together rhythmic, trance-inducing psychedelia and cacophonous pandemonium, unafraid of experimentation across genres. For this release, they connected with Portuguese experimental percussionist João Pais Filipe after meeting up at the Milhões de Festa event in Barcelos, Portugal. This resulting experiment, improvised over 3 days and recorded in four at João’s metal shop, was originally intended to premiere at the (now-socially distanced) 2020 Supersonic Festival in Birmingham, England. Overflowing with meditative tribal percussion and ritual, shamanic musical mantras, these four lengthy tracks ride a rollercoaster of moody atmospherics, Kraut-driven psychedelia and industrial mechanization, and will take an already widened musical mind for a ride.

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Having followed GNOD for some time now, I look forward to their many varieties of sound exploration. With a fervent following, the collective has been mistaken for a quasi-religious assemblage by the uninitiated with album titles like *InGnodWeTrust*, but if any religion is present, it is of the divine in music. Pushing the boundaries of ambient, industrial, noise, and jungle, the group has a residency at The Islington Mill in Salford, UK that far exceeds sound to include light and art installations which serves as their creative workspace, as well as to house members. Their sound is genreless from album to album, generally freeform in production, yet with a consistent honoring of largely western-driven industrial sounds.

Percussionist and instrument designer Filipe plays in multiple experimental and rock outfits, having collaborated with Z’EV, Damo Suzuki (Can), Rafael Toral, Swiss composer Fritz Hauser, free jazz saxophonist Evan Parker, and a myriad of others. His addition to the collaboration tones down the often inorganic underpinnings of GNOD’s craft; while the guitars and noise elements are still apparent, these are not as frequently at the forefront of the music, instead allowing Filipe’s organic rhythms to serve as the foundation. Largely instrumental, only the title track is imbued with distorted vocals. *Faca De Fogo*, which translates to “Knife of Fire” in Portuguese, consists of 4 minimal, lengthy tracks with titles that further represent the organic flow. Each track focuses on the four elements of matter: “Faca de Terra” (earth), “Faca de Ar”

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(air), “Faca de Fogo” (fire) and “Faca de Água” (water).

GNOD brings a spacey and psychedelic vibe to the party with synthetic instruments such as samplers, loop stations and noise machines, but Filipe’s passionate expertise on his massive assortment of percussive instruments brings a pulsing tension to the table: modified bass drums played with hands and sticks, tuned toms, homemade cymbals, as well as snares and a healthy dose of ominous gong. Bass, guitar, and clarinet flesh out the sound, but in all cases ride the waves of rhythm: Filipe is in control, while GNOD learn from the master.

In essence, this is exactly what GNOD seek to do: learn and grow, constantly pushing the boundaries of what they do, and who they are. Both collaborators have promised there will be more records in the future. I, for one, am hoping this is sooner, rather than later.

[Samples available here.](#)