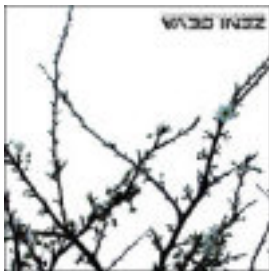


Brainwashed - Zeni Geva, "Maximum Money Monster"

Written by Simon Marshall-Jones
Saturday, 12 January 2008 17:00 -



The music of Zeni Geva has variously been described as heavy metal, noise rock, math rock (apparently because of their use of atypical time signatures), death metal, thrash metal, sludge metal, doom metal and industrial metal; in truth it is all of these categories while at the same time travelling far beyond the trite parameters and restrictions usually associated with them. *Maximum Money Monster*

originally debuted in 1990 and here includes three extra live tracks as bonus material.

[Cold Spring](#)

Zeni Geva's music is above all an intensely intelligent redefinition of 'rock' boundaries and firmly pushes those very same boundaries into new post-rock territories. Admittedly the music does share many of the characteristics and stylings indigenous to the genres mentioned above (such as gruffly shouted vocals, overdriven guitar, pounding drums and screaming solos) but in this case it amounts to sheer intellectual laziness to lump them in with the often moribund and immature aesthetics of such music as well as exhibiting a distinct lack of imagination; there are indeed elements of metal in all its guises in there and no doubt they would be the first to acknowledge the debt owed. ZG are more knowing than that though; using these aspects in combination with the aesthetics, sensibilities and rawness of both punk rock and Japanese the music becomes catalysed into something that is at once all these things and something new, changed beyond the original conception.

There is no denying that ZG constitute a behemoth of a musical outfit both in terms of sound and sheer vital energy. Null's overdriven guitar and powerful voice, supported by the backbone of the relentlessly driving and pounding drums, form the essential blueprint of Zeni Geva's vision. It could so easily have been something of a Frankensteinian chimera, but this creature is expertly and deftly handled by all participants, tightly controlled yet simultaneously allowed full freedom of expression. The various facets and influences show through individually while playing their co-operative part in the whole; the musicians show a flair for combining everything without letting it become an indistinguishable (and undistinguished) mess.

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I would venture to say that Japan is better known for artists and outfits espousing a more extreme vision—bands like Zeni Geva help to redress the balance with their marrying of familiar rock structures with a fiercely independent intelligence, and an intelligence not willing to yield to stasis. The vast majority of music, even that considered to be underground, exists within a comfort zone which it is often reluctant to step outside of. Not only do ZG step outside their own comfort zone, but they do so fearlessly and with both eyes very much firmly open.

samples:

- [Slam King](#)
- [Sweetheart](#)
- [Dead Car, Sun Crash](#)