

## Brainwashed - Menace Ruine, "Cult of Ruins"

Written by Craig Dunton

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By all accounts this is a metal album. From the dark, lo-fi black-and-white artwork, gore-ified fonts and titles, I expected some form of death or black metal, and I was pretty much right on target. Now, knowing the label that put this out, I assumed it couldn't be just any generic metal album, because Alien8 is known for leaning towards the experimental.

### [Alien8 Recordings](#)

The opener, "Process of Bestialization," cemented that hypothesis of mine rather quickly. Sure, the demonic vocals and drum machine blasts raised fingers up in Ronnie James Dio devil horn fashion, but the accompanying controlled feedback that reached a point of near ambience was a different demon entirely, and was definitely conventional riffing or head banging in nature.

For those who like their metal either black or deathy or a combination of both, tracks like "They Who Enter Caves" will fit the bill. It is hard to tell if the track is being led by a processed guitar or a synth but the pace and mood of overall track, coupled with the vocals and drums, is unabashedly metallic in nature. However, the underlying ambience that is a bit more apparent during the ending shows more debt to dark ambient than the rest of the track leads on. Similarly, the 12-minute "Bonded by Wyrd" adds some prog rock elements into the metal sludge with its rapid guitar arpeggios and restrained vocals and massive drum break down during the second half.

Other tracks show the metal vestiges even less, the sustained "kvlt" produced guitar roar of "Dove Instinct" have more in common with label mates Nadja or some overamped release from the heyday of the Cold Meat Industries label than it does to any traditional metal band. Even though "Sky as a Reversed Abyss" is more blatant in its use of guitar and other forms of traditional instrumentation, the lugubrious pace and barely structured guitar put it more in the family tree of early Swans or other like minded industrial-tinged sludgesters.

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It wasn't entirely wrong to immediately assume this is a headbanger's type album (there is definitely a black metal edge to this entire album), the sound is actually much more varied than expected from the genre, and incorporates a significant amount of other stylistic elements that will catch the ears of those who aren't adherent metal heads (such as I). Although this mysterious band (as of this writing there isn't even an entry on discogs.com for them, and they've got everything!) seems to be relatively new on the scene, they are already showing a wide enough array of talents to make them worth keeping an eye on.

samples:

- [They Who Enter Caves](#)
- [Sky Is A Reversed Abyss](#)
- [Dove Instinct](#)