

## Brainwashed - Sub-ID, "BFF"

Written by Matthew Amundsen

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The debut album from Nashville's Sub-ID combines electronics with jazz and hip hop sensibilities. Their blend of acoustic and electronic instruments is seamless, effectively blurring the line between the two. Yet despite the high production values, too often the songs themselves lack distinction and instead settle for a generic middling of their influences.

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Jazz is obviously a big part of the group's aesthetic, but sequencers are no contest for live musicians, especially when they're programmed in such a traditional fashion. The songwriting sounds too constricted and lacks the spontaneity inherent in quality jazz. The live trumpet sprinkled throughout the album sounds great, but without any suitable counterpart, its efforts are somewhat muted. There are some moments of electronic exploration, like on "Marges," but they're so few and far between that they can't save the album's lack of momentum.

Because these songs are so easy on the ear, many of them are better suited for the background than attentive listening. As an album of mostly instrumentals, it's hard to say what the group is trying to express other than a mellow vibe, which isn't saying much. Vocalese appears toward the end of the album, which enhances the songs but doesn't quite provide the direction they're lacking. The album's best songs are "Yup 1" and "The Return." The former most fully realizes the potential in crossing jazz and electronics while the latter provides the album's only real excitement.

The most frustrating thing about BFF is that it's not bad, merely boring. Sub-ID plays it safe with their debut at the expense of any true innovation.

samples:

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- [Punchbowl](#)
- [Yup 1](#)
- [The Return](#)