

Brainwashed - Locrian, "Drenched Lands"

Written by Creag Dunton

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Almost disturbingly prolific, this is the latest (though that might change by the time you read this) disc from this noise/drone/metal duo. While they have been cranking the releases out in their relatively short career, they have at least been consistent with the quality of their releases, and *Drenched Lands*

, for all its metal look and presentation, is one of the more subtle releases I have yet to hear.

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The opening track, "Obsolete Elegy in Effluvia and Dross," sounds like it could be some black metal track, replete with battle axes, corpse paint, and scrawny Nordic men posing in the snow, but instead it starts with simple, clear guitar strumming that is allowed to breathe, with only a subtle underpinning of synth hums, which is a lot more pure and open than a lot of their backcatalogue.

This is pretty much the lightest moment here, the next one, "Ghost Repeater," leads off with a buzzing amplifier and subtle guitar scrapes. High frequency pings start to come in, giving a very rhythmic, but natural sense of minimalism. Towards the second half of its lengthy duration, an anemic guitar squall comes in to push the treble levels even higher. Unfortunately the mix mostly neglects the lower end of the sonic spectrum, and would benefit more from a bit of bass added.

The brittle mix continues into "Barren Temple Obscured By Contaminated Fogs," but is more of an asset. The bits of clear guitar and digital organ sound better skewed this way, and the screamed metal vocals and white noise sound a bit more like a lo-fi Sunn O))), but more

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experimental and less metal. This contrasts the more bassy "Epicedium" that showcases guitar and some ambient tones, a more open work that, once the taut guitar playing kicks in towards the second half, has the structure and tension of a great film soundtrack.

"Obsolete Elegy in Cast Concrete" brings back the pained vocals that do sound very black metal, but are contrasted with the distant electronic bells and more airy synths, where even the chugging metal riffs keep it away from boring and clichéd metal territory. The disc ends with the 30-plus minute "Greyfield Shrines", which is the same live recording I reviewed in its original LP form. While it loses some of its charm as a bonus track rather than a heavy slab of vinyl, it still is a strong and well composed piece of live material.

I must say I'm a bit nervous since each release I've heard from this project is managing to be somewhat different, yet still consistent with the overall vibe of the band, and have not lost any bit of quality. Any time I see this frequency of music being released, I anticipate boredom to set in, but it has yet to happen with Locrian.

samples:

- [Obsolete Elegy in Effluvia and Dross](#)
- [Barren Temple Obscured by Contaminated Fogs](#)
- [Obsolete Elegy in Cast Concrete](#)