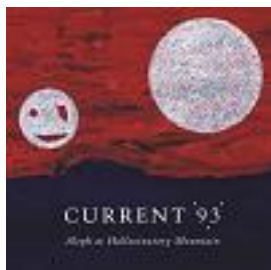


## Brainwashed - Current 93, "Aleph at Hallucinatory Mountain"

Written by John Kealy

Sunday, 17 May 2009 13:21 - Last Updated Monday, 18 May 2009 23:34

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Words like armageddon and visionary get tossed about around David Tibet (for good reason) but with this latest album, these words seem too small and meek. As hinted on *Black Ships Ate the Sky* and the split EP with Om, David Tibet has embraced a blistering rock aesthetic for his apocalyptic visions. Sounding as psychedelic as *Of Ruine Or Some Blazing Starre* or *The Inmost Light* trilogy, there is also a heaviness here not heard since the noisy tape loops of Current 93's embryonic period. Tibet sings of Aleph (an Adam-like character), murder, and destruction as a huge cast of musicians and vocalists create a backdrop worthy of his vision.

### [Coptic Cat](#)

iTunes

Tibet's mythology grows more and more esoteric with each album, a blend of his own internal imagery and biblical terror (stemming from his ongoing obsession with scripture and study of Coptic in order to get closer to the source). "Almost in the beginning was the murderer" states the child's voice at the beginning of the album. From here on in, everything explodes as one of the best line ups yet for Current 93 let rip. Alex Neilson's drumming sounds like thunderclaps at the end of the universe as layers and layers of guitars, feedback and distorted vocals tear through reality. During "On Docetic Mountain," fragments of the familiar folk strains haunt the works of Current 93 swim through the surging pulse, creating a thick and disorientating experience which brings to mind Thee Silver Mt. Zion at their most raucous. Bill Breeze's viola and John Contreras' cello sound almost regal amidst the grinding fuzz that the rest of the group are pouring out. Later on, the rock swamps everything; guitar solos that can only be described as shambolic, face melting blasts of white heat cut through a doom-laden riff on "Not Because the Fox Barks." There is a first time for everything in life and playing air guitar along to Current 93 is one of them.

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With no particular focus beyond a general feeling and Tibet's vision(s), *Aleph at Hallucinatory Mountain* sticks out like a monolith in Current 93's canon. Fears that this album would be a disparate work breaking under the weight of Tibet's many collaborators were completely unfounded. Andrew W.K. and Sasha Grey may be famous for things quite different to Current 93 (as every single article or Internet discussion related to this album seems to dwell on) but they sound as home here as any Current 93 regular. Grey's detached vocals on "As Real As Rainbows" are a world away from her usual performances (researching for reviews can be a very tough job) and she provides a sober and melancholy ending for such a vivid and energetic album.

Aside from some of the electronics and effects dotted throughout *Aleph at Hallucinatory Mountain* and the knowledge that it is just out this week, it would be difficult to place this album in time. It could easily be one of those obscure gems that was on the Nurse With Wound list; in fact it sounds almost like the perfect lost treasure from rock's past. "26 April 2007" has a desert rock vibe but instead of the The Eagles and images of the great plains of America, the music instead conjures up visions of dusty vistas in northern Africa with wanderers trying to find their way back to Eden.

James Joyce once said: "It took me ten years to write *Ulysses*, and it should take you ten years to read it." While I am not going so far to say (yet) that this album is of the same magnitude as *Ulysses*, the principle holds true here as Tibet and his colleagues have put two years of hard work into making this album the monument it is. Steven Stapleton and Andrew Liles have worked their wizardry in post-production to create the layers of sound that form the base of *Aleph at Hallucinatory Mountain*, the level of detail buried in the mix is astounding. With each listen there are further revelations, a warped David Tibet as backing vocalist here and a loop of noise there. I imagine that it will be some time before I have exhausted all of the album's secrets.

With an album as epic as this, it is virtually impossible to sum it up succinctly. It is awesome in that from the opening moments to the dying seconds, I am taken aback by the intensity and conviction. As a listener, *Aleph at Hallucinatory Mountain* drains and exhausts; that Tibet can pull so much emotion from his soul and still function is nothing short of astonishing.

samples:

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- [Invocation of Almost](#)
- [26 April 2007](#)
- [Not Because the Fox Barks](#)