

Brainwashed - Kid606, "Songs About Fucking Steve Albini"

Written by Lucas Schleicher

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Miguel De Pedro continues to find ways to make his already motley discography more diverse and unpredictable. After manipulating and distorting the sounds of Mille minimal techno, glitch, techno, rave, and having an almost intimate encounter with ambient something-or-other, Kid606 is now taking a stab at analog noise. Without his signature beats and usual goofiness to aid him, Miguel sounds a little lost. But, even with its numerous lulls and head-scratching moments, *Songs About Fucking Steve Albini* is one of the better things the Kid has released in the last few years.

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Nothing about the music on De Pedro's latest record suggest that this is even a Kid606 album. The album and song titles and the fact that Kid606 is printed on the cover in big pink letters is all anyone has connecting this noise to that person. The closest Miguel has ever come to textured noise like this is on his Mille Plateaux releases, which featured at least some beats and remnants of the characteristic 606 sound assault. There's none of that happening here, unless some fractured glitch noise and fuzzy static are to be counted as the sole property of Miguel De Pedro. On *Songs About Fucking Steve Albini* I hear the clear influence of guys like Markus Popp, Pan Sonic, Jan St. Werner, and even a little Terry Riley. I guess somebody could argue these musicians have always been an influence on Kid606, but they've never been as clear as they are on this album. If they were all hiding under Miguel's bed in the past, now they're outside running around, playing keep away from Kid606 with his laptops.

Cyclical melodies and chopped up fragments of already fragmented sound make up about 99% of the Kid's arsenal this time around, which means that there are long passages of repetitive junk audio and seemingly aimless noise tangents to be found everywhere. Some are pretty annoying (see "Die Rumpfed Ego"), but others are delicate and surprisingly beautiful

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(check out "Periled Emu God"). I figure without recourse to even a single break, Miguel just loosened the reins, choosing to let the audio lead him instead of the other way around. For the most part this actually works to his advantage, but in the places where Miguel gives up on any and all order, the album falls apart and quickly loses my interest. Thankfully, the Kid sticks to producing lovely slabs of interlocking glacial noise and melody for most of the record. Sometimes single samples churn and buzz away in cardiac-like rhythms and sometimes layers and layers of strange oscillations work together to form an indistinguishable mass of throbbing electrical meat. It's hard not to think of Harmonia or Cluster during the first few songs. That same simple, child-like approach to melody and loops is present from the beginning and survives until very near the end, where it's finally mangled beyond recognition. When Miguel checks himself and builds concise, metered music he simultaneously produces his best, most alluring work. When he loses control and ends up churning out electrical farts and headache-inducing buzz, I'm nearly always tempted to reach for the stop button. Had he saved his prankster audio tendencies for an album where it would fit more convincingly, I'd probably be gushing a little more about Miguel's Albini fucking ways.

Still, how any of this relates to Steve Albini is completely up in the air. Maybe Miguel's use of a bunch of analog equipment is sufficient reason for referencing the king of analog tapes, but I was half-expecting static-filled remixes of Big Black when I first heard the title and saw the cover art. If not that, then I was hoping for at least a little vitriol. After getting over the fact that there wasn't even one consistent beat or a single Big Black sample anywhere on any of the songs, I was able to sit back and appreciate the record for what it is. In the time between I was left wondering why Miguel would choose this album title instead of *606 Diskont* or maybe *Miguel De Pedro and the Phantom Band Play Mika Vainio's Pool Party*

. Reproducing the artwork for *Songs About Fucking*

is cute, but it works against Kid606: the music is already odd and unexpected enough, it doesn't really need a misleading title to make things more difficult. Besides, naming songs after broken up anagrams of your own name is pretty lazy. The Important website tells me that Miguel spent a lot of time recording and putting this music together (many years, apparently). I wish he would have spent more time personalizing the project, because the music definitely deserves something more unique.

samples:

- [Dim Ego Prelude](#)
- [Periled Emu God](#)
- [Deep Lid Morgue](#)