

Brainwashed - Merzbow, "Takahe Collage"

Written by Creag Dunton

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Having had a few years elapse since hearing my last Masami Akita record, this seemed like a good time to step back in. The best thing about following this schedule with his work is that the variation and evolution he has shown in his overall sound keep things consistently fresh. *Takahe Collage*

covers both his harsh noise past and his flirtations with rhythm in a way that meshes together perfectly.

[Handmade Birds](#)

The first two pieces clock in at around a half hour each, making this album not among the easiest to digest, but Akita excels within these longer frameworks. The title piece launches off immediately, presenting his more recent approach to electronic rhythms, but processed in his own idiosyncratic way. A paring of an blasting drum machine with lurching machinery underscores an erratic barrage of dive-bombing sine waves.

The rhythms continue throughout, evolving and shifting from synth pulses to insistent bulldozer surges to mix both distorted noise and pure, aggressive tones. At times the rhythms lock in and the remainder of the mix becomes more sparse, and a very *Information Overload Unit* era SPK sensibility bleeds through. Within the closing minutes, however, he goes for the usual balls out Merzbow noise roar.

"Tendenko" is more of a throwback to the mid '90s era of Merzbow (which is where my experience with him began), that goes for the walls of slowly shifting noise that the Incapacitants do so well, with a bit less of Akita's junk metal noise shining through. As old school as it is, there still is a buried, underlying rhythm that nods to his more recent works, covering both classic and modern sounds.

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On the shorter (at a paltry 12 minutes) closer "Grand Owl Habitat," once again the rhythms are removed, with an overall dense, complex structure with individual pieces sliding in and out from one another: a rigid, stuttering rhythm with blasts of noise going off all around. It is similar to the title piece, but not quite as diverse, but due to its comparatively shorter duration it is not a problem.

After having burnt myself out on his release schedule in the latter part of the 1990s, my more contemporary experiences with Akita's output have been both more enjoyable and more rewarding. While my self-imposed distance from his always exponentially expanding discography may have improved my appreciation, *Takahe Collage* feels like more than that: a compelling work that is not just a great Merzbow record, but an exceptional noise album on its own.

samples:

- [Takahe Collage](#)
- [Tendenko](#)
- [Grand Owl Habitat](#)