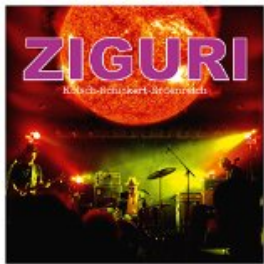


Brainwashed - Ziguri, “Kölsch-Schickert-Erdenreich”

Written by Duncan Edwards

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Ziguri's debut album, produced by Schneider TM, blends smooth and powerful motorik monotony, babbling vocals, and also dares to set Thomas Pynchon lyrics to music.

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In 1987, Günter Schickert, Udo Erdenreich and Dieter Kölsch, from the Berlin theater 100Fleck, formed Ziguri Ego Zoo, a musical theater project which soon became the group Ziguri. They played together until 1997 but the trio reformed in 2011 and their close understanding is the key factor in the success of this recording. Another is Günter Schickert, a well known innovator of hypnotic and psychedelic music. He and Manuel Götsching are among the figures pioneering the use of echo guitar and his solo albums *Samtvoegel* (1974) and *Überfällig* (1979) are revered cult classics.

The opening piece, “General Klickman,” begins with an aggressive, garagey riff to build a raw tension, evolves into a slower and more medieval-sounding sombreness, and then repeats. The five tracks mainly consist of passages of driving drumbeats and bass lines, over which floats Schickert's trancey guitar. Here and there, short bursts of speed-gibberish chant match the urban-tribal atmosphere of the music.

Stuck splendidly in the middle of this album is “Yoyodyne,” a daring manifestation of Pynchon's spoof of brainwashed industrial devotion in the employee chant of the Yoyodyne corporation. Ziguri gets the balance between inane, bawdy, sinister, and paranoid, just right. Pynchon's experiences working as a technical writer at Boeing, in Seattle, inspired the fictional defense

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contractor Yoyodyne corporation in his books *V.* (1963) and *The Crying of Lot 49* (1966). Well-named, too, since the "dyne" is the standard unit of force in the centimeter-gram-second system of units, derived from the Greek word dynamis, and hence real companies, such as Teledyne, Teradyne, and Rocketdyne (an aerospace company) have existed.

One theme of Pynchon's work is the concept of entropy, but almost thirty years since their formation Ziguri seem to fly in the face of that by still prospering and honing their sound, rather than decaying. I was a bit wary of a group named after the peyote cactus which contains mescaline, since drug use is duller to me than tupperware parties. Thankfully, *Kölsch-Schickert-Erdenreich* revels in a good kind of monotony. Or, to tweak the words of G.K.Chesterton: "monotony, either in its sensation or its infliction, is simply the quality of a person. There are no dreary sounds; there are only dreary sound hearers."