

Brainwashed - Jason Crumer, "A Personal Hell"

Written by Creag Dunton

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On this combination CDR and 7" single, Crumer continues to demonstrate why he's so highly regarded in the noise scene. The 7" channels the best elements of the junk metal and maxed out overdrive pedal style, while the CD takes a slow, droning direction to nicely contrast the cut up harsh stuff.

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On the vomit swirl colored vinyl, "Exile Pursuing Abyss" begins with a scraping/grinding metal loop that builds in complexity, found sounds of junk being layered atop one another before launching into pure workroom chaos, with tools and metal buckets being thrown about in a fit of rage before the electronics kick in. There's what sounds like an occasional digital stutter, but for the most part there's a purely analog vibe here. No way in hell this could be labeled anything but "harsh," but it stays away from the impulse to just peg everything into the red: there is a great deal of activity going on here that repeated listenings can reveal.

The flip side, "Old Country Buffet Incident" opens with a similar junk metal grind, but quickly segues into electronic noise. Here the sound is more cut and paste, with lots of quick cuts and edits, with layers building upon each other and then tearing apart, all with the interspersed rapid-fire machine gun type drum machine beat. In the latter half, the overdriven noise is met with distant pure tonal drone to create a great dichotomy.

On the CD is a single 77 minute track, "A Personal Hell," that goes for the more "sustained noise experience," developing from a slow reverberated crawl into shimmering electronic drones interspersed with basic analog noise. The sound swells up into low end scraping noise that is allowed to slowly decay and collapse, leaving basic echoes and ringing tones to linger in the frozen air, just to get noisy again. It works far better as a drone piece, because it lacks the dynamic range of the 7" single, but still makes for a nice blast of cold sonic air.

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Between the two formats, Crumer covers the variations and nuances of the noise scene expertly. Personally I favor the material on the 7" record, which is as active and diverse as any of the best noise releases, but the long piece on the CD is no slouch either. While I didn't try it out in time for this review, I can imagine there's a world of sound and variation that can be found by playing both the vinyl and the CD at the same time, which I think I'm going to go do now...