

Brainwashed - PureH, "Signia"

Written by Creag Dunton

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Although ostensibly a remix album, there is no need to be familiar with the source material to enjoy the remix work here. From what I gather, PureH are a successful electronic rock band out of Slovenia who invited a slew of electronic artists to rework a single track, "Signia." Not being familiar with the original track, I purposely avoided listening to the initial song to fully appreciate the remixes, which all vary greatly and, as a whole, make for strong, diverse tracks.

[Pharmafabrik](#)

It is not hard to recall the all too brief existence of the so-called "isolationist" outgrowth of ambient music when looking at the artists charged with remixing PureH's track. Anyone who was listening to music of that ilk in the mid to late '90s (led by prolific artists such as Bill Laswell, Mick Harris, and Justin Broadrick) will recall names like Eraldo Bernocchi, P.C.M., D.J. Surgeon, and K.K. Null, who all appear on here. And along with these "big boys" there's a good mix of lesser known artists who show they have got the chops to hang with the established guys.

The established artists show that, some ten years after they first stepped on the scene (at least from this reviewer's perspective) they have largely refined and honed their work to stay contemporary, yet not alienate those who remember them from back in the day. K. K. Null takes the rather conventional sounding original material and pitch shifts it to a painful high end shriek as well as cutting up the rhythm section into dense, distorted loops that still allow a semblance of the original sound (via voical fragments and somewhat recognizable elements), but twists and turns it into pure sonic sadism in his "Signia Pagan" mix.

Another of the old recognizable names is the duo of P.C.M., who, though mostly limited to remixes and a single "on Mick Harris' old Possible label. They start out their "Signia Blue Waters Turn Black" mix with an opaque haze of thick reverb drenched loops that are met with a slow, monotone beat that eventually explodes into a hardcore blast of a drum n bass loop that plows through the mix like a pipe bomb. It has the manic intensity of

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vintage Squarepusher or Aphex Twin, but without the whimsical trappings and a sense of pure insanity. Unfortunately, Eraldo Bernocchi seems to have not developed his art as much as the others: while the dubby beat and subsonic bassline stay solid, there is simply less variation or development on here, and it's repetitive nature is among the gripes of artists from the time period.

The artists that I'm not quite as familiar with also hold their own among the big names. Chris Wood excerpts the electronic elements and tones from the original track and cuts them up with a high end skittering drum loop that morphs and changes throughout, making for an extremely dynamic track. Wodan takes the track for a more electro spin on "Signia H Light," throwing down an old school stiff monotone beat, swirled bass pastiches and an ordinate amount of distortion. Another unique take comes from Taiwanese artist MoShang, who uses the rock track as clay to sculpt into a light take on downtempo electronica, mixing in a hip-hop beat and additional samples. It's not really my thing, but it is well done. Clocking in at 16 minutes, Psychedelic Desert's "Signia Live Farce" mix comes across with good intentions, stripping the track down to only its most rudimentary sounds and tones, but over such a length it begins to drag and slow down. If it had been around the eight minutes that most of the other mixes were, it would have been a great contribution.

It is great to know that, even with my intentional abstention from checking out the original track, these artists can use that source material to design tracks that, while standing out on their own, still feel thematically linked by the occasional untreated elements of the original work coming through. Those who long for the days when dark textures mixed with hip-hop/jungle loops like peanut butter and chocolate will enjoy this stroll down memory lane. Now, to check out the original "Signia" track....

samples:

- [Signia "Blue Waters Turn Black" \(P.C.M. Mix\)](#)
- [Signia "Ukwakha" \(Chris Wood Mix\)](#)
- [Signia "Live Farce Mix" \(Psychedelic Desert Mix\)](#)