

## Brainwashed - Badgerlore, "We Are All Hopeful Farmers, We Are All Scared Rabbits"

Written by Craig Dunton

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The premise alone sounds should be enough to get people's attention: a folk &quot;supergroup&quot; featuring members of Yellow Swans, Deerhoof, Six Organs of Admittance, and Charalambides, among others. Considering the pedigree, it is safe to assume that it won't be folk in the conventional sense. Instead of the &quot;overly sensitive guy in the coffee shop with an acoustic guitar&quot; folk sense, it's more of an ethnography of early Americana music. It is dense, rich, and more than just a bit sinister in nature.

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How this record got lumped into anything allied with the &quot;freak folk&quot; movement is a bit confusing to me, as it has little in common with the likes of Devendra Banhart or other such luminaries. No, rather than acoustic guitar and out there vocals and lyricisms, it is a work that captures the sense of early American folk music in the pre-recording technology era. The entire work is steeped in a sensation of isolated, rural Appalachia, the sound filling the cool autumn air as the sun starts to set and things start getting a bit creepy.

The tracks are awash in a thick, oppressive reverb that sets the mood throughout. On most of the tracks a bit of plaintive guitar pushes through the reverberation, sparse and sharp, but gentle and isolated. Often the guitar is played in a simple, rhythmic fashion, such as the minimal strums that make up &quot;Mountain Wine&quot; and &quot;Duet,&quot; the latter accompanied by a decrepit sounding organ that may have been on its last legs.

Vocals make their appearance on a few of the tracks, notably on &quot;The Crops That You Tend&quot; and &quot;Mountain Wine&quot; and in those cases are exactly the type of vocals to best suit the music: multiple vocalists, layered, and heavily effected. The chanting cadence of them lends an otherworldly disembodied sensation that fits the music. The vocals are there, but they sound as if they're coming from somewhere just out of sight.

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The instrumentation manages to somehow be both sparse and thick, which sounds like a contradiction for obvious reasons, but there really is no other way to describe it. Layers of ambience that permeate most of the tracks and are featured in a few short instrumental passages such as "Whichever" and "Snowballs for Reuven," and as backing elements for most of the other tracks are thick and notable, and balance the more plaintive guitar/violin/organ elements nicely. There are a few moments of pure on electronic noise squeal as well; the droning elements of "We Are All Hopeful Farmers" and especially the opening of "Grow Your Hair" are nice contrasting elements to the more gentle moments.

The production of this entire work is noteworthy, as it is extremely murky in the best possible way. Not murky as in muddled or poor, but like a thick mountain fog that covers the entire album in a sheen of ambiguity. The sounds are somewhat familiar, but they're obscured by layers of echo and reverb that places the listener in recognizable, but mysterious territory, all of which adds to the underlying tension and malevolence that seems to hide just below the surface of the music.

This collaboration has produced a work that is greater than the sum of its parts. It is a great, tension laden slab of darkness that outcreeps most noise and metal albums that have been released thus far this year. A wonderfully moody work that is extremely filmic and stands on its own without the need of images to go along with the sonics.

samples:

- [Goodnight Sweet Rabbits](#)
- [Mountain Wine](#)
- [Grow Your Hair](#)