

Brainwashed - Climax Golden Twins, "Eerie Fragrance"

Written by Anthony D'Amico

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First issued as a cassette-only release in 1995 with a variety of different names (ranging from *Eyeless Fabrication*

to

Eat Fuck

), this long-unavailable early gem from Seattle's beloved lo-fi sound collage weirdos is now available once again (in the decidedly more prestigious format of vinyl).

[Etude Records](#)



Eerie Fragrance (along with *Climax Golden Hiss*) is considered to be one of the first real, albeit formative and fumbling, manifestations of the otherworldly and unique Climax Golden Twins aesthetic. The "band" at the point of these sessions consisted of only Jeffery Taylor and Rob Millis, however, as their career progressed the duo added new members and collaborators and eventually evolved far beyond their sloppy noise roots into the realm of sublime ambiance and serious art (perhaps culminating in their 2001 soundtrack for Brad Anderson's

Session 9

). The core duo of Millis and Taylor are also responsible for curating Dust-to-Digital's amazing *Victrola Favorites*

compilation, so their growing renown as respected musicologists is quite likely to someday eclipse the band's influence (Millis in particular is actively hastening that process by lecturing and making films for Sublime Frequencies).

While thankfully CGT's deeply aberrant nature has not significantly waned with their growing professionalism and success, the band's self-professed "free hillbilly noise epilepsy" and ideologically punk roots have become much less prominent with age. As such, the clumsy (yet inspired) amateurism of their early work still holds a great deal of charm (and is much more similar in spirit to Seattle's other bastions of cultish eccentricity, The Sun City Girls). While *Eerie Fragrance*

undeniably lacks the nuance, cohesion, and beauty of more recent Twins releases, its crackling, skewed, free-form experimentation is still quite compelling in its own right.

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All of the tracks included here are essentially formless, disquieting miasmas of ethnic field recordings, long-forgotten snippets from 78s, mangled and distressed tapes, found sounds, and sludgy garage rock flailings. My favorite track is the opener, "EF Part One," which is memorably constructed of rumbling de-tuned bass, eerie flutes, a child's voice repeatedly stating "listen...I'm really sorry," squiggling and squelching noise blasts, and meditative Chinese percussion. It is followed by the much more abrasive and deranged "EF Part Two," which begins on a deceptively muted note with a slowed-down and pitch-shifted reggae sample. The side ends with the brief, but dense, lunacy of "Toyland," which combines calliope, children's records, and early comedy records into a flurry of ADD-addled, anachronistic disorientation.

The second side begins with the haunting "EF Three," which centers around creepy, quavering string samples combined with field recordings from some mysterious foreign street environment, and a host of oft mangled and vaguely Indian stringed instrument improvisations. That atmosphere of dread, however, is dissipated with "EF Part Four," which begins with some dissonant ringing and layered Chinese or Indian percussion before degenerating into a cathartic gale of static, rumblings, and radio noises. There are two more tracks on the side, "Cowboy Weather" and "What was Pointless," but it is very difficult to tell where one track ends and the next begins: the important thing is that neither the quality nor the unrelenting lysergic weirdness show any signs of lessening.

Eerie Fragrance is a charismatic and idiosyncratic album that sounds quite like nothing else I have heard: this is the musical equivalent of taking an enormous amount of cold medication and watching television in the middle of the night, while constantly flipping through channels, flickering in and out of consciousness, and having very strange and disjointed dreams (albeit in a good way, of course). This is a rather instructive example of how great art can originate from the most minimal of materials.

Samples:

- [EF Part One](#)
- [EF Part Two](#)
- [EF Part Three](#)