

Brainwashed - The Humble Bee, "A Miscellany for the Quiet Hours"

Written by Anthony D'Amico

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It admittedly took me a while to finally connect all the dots in my head, but it dawned on me recently that The Boats were kind of the Throbbing Gristle of a hard-to-define strain of ambient-adjacent bittersweet melancholia. My case: both Andrew Hargreaves and/or Craig Tattersall have been consistently involved in a host of varied and wonderful projects for more than two decades now (Hood, The Remote Viewer, Tape Loop Orchestra, etc.). The tape loop-focused The Humble Bee is Tattersall's most prolific and consistent endeavor; he has been releasing solo work and collaborations under that moniker since 2009. In fact, this album was the project's debut, but I only recently heard it for the first time, as its initial release was a limited CDr in a handmade case made from repurposed book covers (pictured). Last month, it got a well-deserved reissue on vinyl from the endearingly eccentric Astral Industries with VERY different cover art and it sold out instantly. That gives me hope for humanity, as this incredibly beautiful and absolutely sublime release deserves as much exposure as it can get. A

Miscellany for the Quiet Hours

is a stone-cold classic.

Cotton Goods/ [Astral Industries](#)

Given the literary/antiquarian bent of the original packaging, "The Bedside Book" fittingly opens the album on a note of dreamily flickering, sepia-toned wistfulness. It conjures an understatedly gorgeous pile-up of frayed, overlapping, and gently crackling antique music box loops. The hits just keep coming from there, as Tattersall ingeniously weaves sparse melodic fragments into richly textured and sometimes achingly beautiful collages that feel like the work of an enchanted Victrola. I realize that the magic of this album is simply "Craig Tattersall has a great ear for loops and is extremely skilled at collaging them in interesting, soulful ways." However, it is still a genuinely surprising and improbable convergence of different threads. It sometimes seems like Mary Lattimore recorded source material for *Everyone Alive Wants Answers*—era Colleen, but then Philip Jeck cannibalized their album and teamed up with a jazz guy for an impressionistic and understated accompaniment to a night of classic silent film. In less convoluted terms, that means that Tattersall uses a lot of simple, but lovely harp-like melodies that pop, crackle, and warble in pleasantly languorous fashion, but sometimes a double bass or a trumpet will steer things in a more sensual or noir direction. The album highlight is probably "Technical Press," which punches up Tattersall's already beautiful vision with a cool bass loop and plenty of wobbly and warped psychedelic flourishes. Elsewhere, "With Answers" makes

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similarly effective use of backwards sounds, but in more throbbing, ambient-minded fashion, while the closing "P209" feels like a killer dub techno classic that's been frayed and hiss-ravaged into something a bit more hypnagogic. While those four pieces are currently my favorites, competition is unusually fierce, as Tattersall's instincts are absolutely unerring on this album.

Samples can be found [here](#) .