

Brainwashed - Efdemin, "Efdemin"

Written by Gary Suarez

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Rubbernecking forum jockeys and slobbering music reviewers alike have all but hailed this record as all but the Second Coming of Techno, with many hastily adding it to their "Best of 2007" lists. For all of its bandwagon hype and post-Detroit sleekness, this self-titled full-length comes off remarkably good but not astonishingly great.

[Dial](#)

Dispensed in both CD and double LP formats, Phillip Sollman's first album as Efdemin makes frequent, almost casual references to early naughties Force Tracks tech-house as often as more recent Kompakt electronic dance music. Working capably within a manifestly derivative style, Sollman eagerly inches his way towards grand peaks and windswept valleys on "Lohn & Brot"; Tracks like "Back To School" are meant to lift the spirits on the dancefloor, utilizing emotive layered sounds replete with carefully crafted hooks.

It is abundantly clear how much Sollman adores melody; when trying his hand at asceticism, as with the bleak "Stately, Yes," he can hardly resist nearly four minutes in to let rays of sparkling light burst through.

The slowing metamorphosing "Bergwein" adds some of that old school Artificial Intelligence warmth into the mix, while "April Fools" disrupts its own sense of calm with pinprick percussion, militantly rigid stabs, and camera shutter snares.

Founded by a trio of well-regarded producers, Dial rightfully earns considerable respect from anyone following minimal techno and house. Since 2000, the label has output a fair number of memorable releases on vinyl and compact disc, among these one of my favorite albums of the last few years: Pantha Du Prince's superlative Dia
mond Daze

Fans of that record, his recent follow-up, and the rest of Dial's roster will assuredly find plenty to like in this project, as will those who still romanticize tech-house's past.

Those hoping for a progression worthy of the attention presently being paid to this album, however, will likely find that it's hardly the brilliant masterpiece it's been previously been chalked up as.