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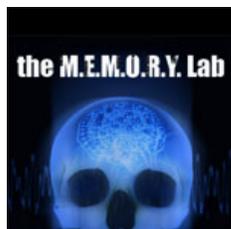
T U V W X Y Z

Various (splits)

Various (compilations)

the M.E.M.O.R.Y. Lab - *Modern Expressing Machines of Revolutionary Youth*

CD, D-trash Records, 2009



Sometimes, it's best to ignore all the writing and promo material about a band before listening if you've not heard them before. Which is what I did here - other than knowing the label that they were on. D-Trash records are a small label that I've not really come across other than their release of a tribute album to Atari Teenage Riot a year or two back, and I get the distinct impression that heavy electronics with guitars is a general trend.

Things start impressively, and along those lines, too. "Cambia (Change)" starts with a vaguely familiar film sample, a thumping rhythmic beat and a cyclic guitar riff, and other than the addition of the odd choral sample and a handful of breakdowns, things go on without any real change for over six minutes. The much shorter "A Bad Dream (the Wrong Dream)" is rather more impressive, with brief eruptions of controlled power, and more importantly actually sounds the work of a band rather than the cut'n'paste feel of the first track - although really unexpected is the extensive use of part of a Young Gods track (I'm pretty certain it's from the climax of "Moon Revolutions") in the last minute or so which a rather blatant (and cheeky) steal.

Every band needs more cowbell, of course, and this is delivered in "Divine Eating", along with a steadily building beat and religious samples... Although the clean-ish vocals here try their best to sound sneering and frankly fall a bit flat. "Mind Rape (Government's Business)" opens with yet more samples - this time various anti-Government themed samples looping over and over, and after well beyond a minute of this, it's overstayed its welcome. Which makes it all the more surprising for the samples to be suddenly swept away by a breakbeat and a track that is bubbling with fury. "Another Nail Into The Cross" takes things into very wierd realms indeed. A forbidding church organ forms the basis of the track, with ghostly, wailed vocals that are difficult to make out clearly. Four minutes into this seven minute track - again, my patience was being tested by this point - the track does another volte-face into an industrial metal sound, where choirs join us again, and yet more wailed vocals. "My Little World" is a chaotic mess, seemingly everything attempting to fight to the forefront of the mix with uncomfortably poor vocals. I should add at this point that the whole album is mixed unusually loudly, without any apparent restraint being taken, meaning that the recording is frequently a triumph of brute force over compositional skills. Similarly chaotic is "To Go All The Way", with what sounds to be at least two separate drum rhythms at points (and again, they sound naggingly familiar, with another blatant steal from Sepultura), only for it to switch to a piano-based calm at points too. The final track "Mother's Womb" is another lengthy track, that doesn't really seem to go anywhere and lets this messy forty-three minutes conclude with little more than a whimper.

It was initially difficult to know what to make of this, but when you dig into who is behind the band, you begin to expect much more. Marc Urselli is a three-time Grammy Award winner, and the other members have been involved in such extreme metal luminaries as Aborym. So really, they can surely do so much better than this, a scattershot, aimless morass of industrial chaos that seems to fancy itself as far more than the sum of the parts involved.

-- Adam Williams [3/10]