

Brainwashed - Stephen Vitiello and Taylor Deupree, "The Fridman Variations"

Written by 12K

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Both Stephen Vitiello and Taylor Deupree are seasoned collaborators. Each new collaboration is a new context, a new conversation and a unique opportunity to learn. Vitiello has worked with musicians such as Scanner, Steve Roden, Ryuichi Sakamoto and Machinefabriek. As an artist often represented in galleries and large scale sound installations he has also had the frequent opportunity to work with visual artists from the likes of Tony Oursler to Julie Mehretu and Joan Jonas. Deupree has a long history of collaboration including early works with Christopher Willits and Richard Chartier as well as Marcus Fischer, Ryuichi Sakamoto, and Bon Iver's S. Carey. *Fridman Variations* is Vitiello and Deupree's third release together and continues their tradition of exploring their unique form of experimental improvisation.

Stemming from a live performance at NYC's Fridman Gallery, *Fridman Variations* was co-produced by the gallery and will remain as part of the gallery's publications. Fridman Gallery is a visual exhibition space that also boasts a unique dedication to experimental music through their annual New Ear Festival, at which Vitiello and Deupree performed and recorded the main piece for this album.

Side A of *Fridman Variations* is the live recording, edited for vinyl while side B contains two pieces made with some of the same source material as the live performance and intended to be related, but entirely new, works. Guitar, modular synthesizer and a small tape synthesizer are at the heart of these songs. The improved layers draw on buried melodies and hint of field recordings and found textures. Not overly melodic, not overly noisy, Vitiello and Deupree like to find the edge between the pretty and the obscure, often suggesting more than laying their intentions bare. This type of sound is one that the duo often explores as an opportunity for Deupree to adventure beyond his melodic comfort zone and for Vitiello to work and experiment with new instruments and how they interact with his signature guitar.

One of the biggest inspirations to the artists for this work was the hushed and dreamy state of the audience during the performance. The late-night ambience added to the immersive quality of the surround speakers and helped to channel creativity and a sense of sharing.

Both artists feel that recording live performances is an opportunity to capture a unique moment that simply won't happen again. Despite a performance's flaws or imperfections the energy and interaction is a special moment in time for the performers and audience. The opportunity to not

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only document it for the listeners who were present but also to be able to share the moment with those who weren't there is a positive one. To further be able to expand on the ideas in the controlled studio environment serves to enrich the experience and further the communication.

More information can be found [here](#) .