

Brainwashed - THE ROOTSMAN, "VERSION OF THE UNSEEN" EP

Written by Mark Weddle

Saturday, 15 January 2000 19:00 - Last Updated Thursday, 25 August 2005 23:16

The Rootsman is an English DJ/dub musician with 15 years experience and a discography that includes over two dozen EPs and albums since 1994.



'Versions of the Unseen' is a 6 track remix EP follow-up to the most recent album 'Realms of the Unseen' on Third Eye Music and is thankfully available domestically for ~\$7 via Portland, OR label BSI Records. This is my first taste of Rootsman besides his 2 remix albums with Muslimgauze: 'City Of Djinn' (which is being re-issued by Third Eye in February) and 'Return to the City Of Djinn'. The 6 tracks here include the album versions of 'Al Andalus' and 'Beyond the Hills', 2 Rootsman dub mixes of the former and a Ras Boras (of Treponem Pal) remix of the latter, and the non album track 'Imitator' remade by BSI's Landau. Of the 3 versions of 'Al Andalus', the album version is the best. MC Johnny Lone drops a laid back Spanish history rhyme about 'Al Andalus land of kings and queens' over a smooth, mid tempo dub-hip-hop backing. The dub mixes are similar and, of course, delete much of the vocals save for the occasional blurt out through the echo chamber. 'Imitator' is very in your face with barrages of snare heavy drumming and sudden sampled vocal outbursts. You can dance to it, but you might hurt yourself. The 2 versions of 'Beyond the Hills' are very different. Ras Boras' remix is uptempo and playful with a bleepy electro sound and an amusing Dr. Dre style high-pitched keyboard melody. The original is down tempo with some gentle wailing female vocals, piano, gurgling synth lines, beautiful flute (?) melodies and tabla rhythms. All together, this EP is nice and varied and good news for dub fans. I'm intrigued enough to seek out an album next.

—