



Recorded live at Tokyo's *Super Deluxe* club in 2017, this trio's 10th release is dedicated to Hideo Ikeezumi, founder of the incredible P.S.F. label and Modern Music store who died the same day. Mr. Ikeezumi was a fierce and relentless advocate for Japan's underground scene and an early champion of Haino. For this concert, the three agreed their unrehearsed improvisation would be "electronic" but not which instruments any of them would play. Haino also uses a double-reed horn, the *suona*, traditionally used in a variety of settings and rituals including funerals, producing blaring, high-pitched sounds for both the living and the dead. I find this a bold, delicate, fascinating, and ultimately rather moving, album; albeit with a title far too long to mention in such a brief review.

## [Black Truffle](#)

Other than the *suona*, it is not always possible to know who is making which sound, and that does not really matter. The important thing is to hear the trio responding to each other brilliantly, without flashiness, and feel the music retaining its intensity even as the longer pieces take their time to develop. These improvisations have (known and unknown) creative methods by which elements of harmony, melody, and rhythm are achieved. The group's abstract expressionism, unpredictable, coherent, and deliberate, allows gives plenty of opportunity for subjective interpretation. At times I imagined an airtight module in space, at others un-manned train trucks engaged in dubious activities far beneath a mountain. I heard traces of bleeping static buzz and pictured a dystopian wilderness, stalactites thawing and dripping in a radioactive cave, locusts crawling inside air ducts, an astronaut's life support system going into crisis mode, a security patrol blasting horns five light years away, and the feeling of waking from a nap to find the launderette is flooding. As with several albums by the group, it is possible to see Haino as the central figure, perhaps like an actor in a film, with O'Rourke and Ambarchi setting up the lighting, or changing the scenery, but on the other hand things seem nicely balanced, with perfectly equal exchanges. For example, as the *suona* wails with longer and longer notes like a grief stricken bird crying out into eternity, alternated with passages where Haino must be catching his breath, O'Rourke and Ambarchi provide deeper and lower tones, some gong-like sustain, a section of higher-frequency twinkling and pulsing, slow bass notes and a fading signal.

## **Brainwashed - Keiji Haino / Jim O'Rourke / Oren Ambarchi, "Each side has a depth of 5 seconds..."**

Written by Duncan Edwards

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The shorter final track (of four) is full of whooshing, crackling, echo: a beautiful coda as if the machines somehow continued to play after the trio had gone, suggestive perhaps of a residue of life, or the detection of brain wave activity after physical death. By the way, Dewey Redman used to play the suona (which he called a "musette") as did Mick Karn, who listed it as a "dida." I must add that the album cover is stunning - Lasse Marhaug's photograph from Norway, of the Ellingsrudåsen station on the Oslo metro, line 2. The last stop on the line; the exit that goes into the forest.

[samples available here](#)