

SWARM INTELLIGENCE - RUST

Only one year has passed since **Simon Hayes**, known as **Swarm Intelligence**, has released his first album for the Berlin-based label **Ad Noiseam, Faction**, a very particular album in the cross-genre post-industrial landscape because of its touchable sensation of claustrophobia that, in our analysis, evoked also **Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon**, as we had the sensation that his sound was an invisible prison which boundaries were really few, never inappropriate, really heavy beats.

Rust is a work that strongly changes Hayes's sound, although it confirms a certain slight common thread with the previous album, and this change has happened only in twelve months. Rust is the quintessence of what could be identified with industrial music today, it's the personal trip of Hayes who, after having clinically analyzed the ruins of *einsturzende Neubauten*, in other words those few things that survived to the "new – at that time" buildings that have fallen down, concentrates upon the process of absorption of sounds (and, consequently, their context) coming from abandoned factories and power plants, as well as from corroded metals and particularly interesting *objet trouvé* in a Duchampian operation and that certain electronic and industrial music focused on sound research have inherited.

Hayes creates, by means of his headphones, a point of communication between the human and the industrial world, making an interesting analysis that will bring, and that's its goal, the listener to listen to the noisy communication between the machines. Yes, we know it, maybe this topic has been faced already dozens of times, even if in an immature and in an inaccurate way, but what is interesting is how Hayes proposes an incredibly modern and cross-genres music that, anyway, stays loyal to the early-industrial approaches: this is a perfect example of smart evolution.

Musically Rust is a work different from its predecessor because it doesn't propose a unique monolithic approach, but searches, in equal parts, to satisfy all the tastes: it's a work characterized by a rather strong cinematic taste, that could make us think about an operation similar to that made by **Rudy Ratzinger** with **Caro** and **Jeunet's The Bunker of the Last Gunshots**, with the difference that here Hayes's movie is not the product of a director's imagination, but historic memory of the places, now unused, visited by Hayes: it seems like those walls now empty could talk about a glorious past, about efforts aimed at the building of "new buildings", like in *Excavator 288*, or of *Demolition ground*, one of the best episodes as well as one of the more particular, pure old school experimentation: here the sounds processed are invited to talk within a mechanic dialogue, slow and heavy, leaving aside *any human intervention*, to cite **Aborym**.

Shorter or longer sorts of "intermezzi" are present too, whose goal is, on the one hand, to make us dream the cruelty and the coldness of the post-industrial landscapes and, on the other hand, to link between themselves the several scenes of the plot, such as the opener *Courtyard* and the final songs *Chamber* and *Thierbach demolish*, but what really differentiates this album from his direct predecessor is the major emphasis put on the rhythmic patterns that, although always have an intrinsic and clear meaning – let's think about the brilliance of the rhythmic reinforcement in *Iridescent* which clear goal is to let the rhythmic becoming deeper and more organic – are more well-structured and complex, without, at the same time, being danceable. It's clear that this isn't what the musician is aiming to.

In *Iridescent* and in the lead role that the hard rhythmic has, it's possible to understand how Hayes has surely being influenced by the label's releases, those characterized by a heavy and not squared

rhythmic, complex and aggressive, that in *Faction*, for example, wasn't much listenable, and this is a very good song within which the noisy carpet in the background, the shivering and constant rhythm, sometimes more trenchant, and a general dark mood that evokes the grayness as well as the sadness evoked by the rusted walls of the abandoned factories coexist perfectly together, but it's maybe the following *Vibrating wire* the rhythmic masterpiece of the album, that in its sounds partially evokes *Antenna*, present in the previous album, however constituting a perfect kaleidoscopic evolution in which is possible to listen to a sequence of rhythmic more tarantulated in the beginning, then slower and particularly heavy (listen to the dirty and filthy noisy floor in the slower rhythmic sequence to understand its value). It's a true upgrade for Hayes, demonstrating how the musician doesn't have fear to leave behind the formula that created his success the year before.

Hayes can rely on several other strings to his bow, as, after the already talked about masterpiece that recalls the **Marcel Duchamp** techniques, *Demolition ground*, and after the astonishing already talked about *Excavator 288*, slow, heavy and evocative as it evokes the noise produced by a working excavator, three songs characterized by a very high musical value follow. The first one is *Low power line*, even this a cinematic episode characterized by a slow, heavy and engaging slightly distorted beat and by a strong obscure and industrial power as well as by siderurgic sounds (in the true sense of the word) and by a huge impression. The second, *Barricade*, is the fastest and the more linked to a more techno-derived approach, a squared rhythm upon which the rough beats of the drum machines hit crazy (in backbeat). The third is the long *Attic spring*, even this very cinematic, in which the rhythm is rather squared and solemn, martial and frozen scaffolding that is located in a post-industrial desert made of abandoned locations and tastable fog: a post-atomic landscape which perfect spatial position is the city of Prypiat. Even here a great astonishing noisy pause can be found as well as the sonic mood typical of the places that have lost every hope.

Rust is a work in which, instead of *Faction*, several different elements coexist and find their expression in songs each of those has its own, very recognizable, identity. Rust is also a work in which Swarm Intelligence, with great mastery, succeeds in recovering an old sound and in transposing it in our current age, producing an only apparently easy album, but in which an enormous quantity of processed sounds, any kind of hints, rhythmic changes and atmospheres can be found. This is a work that requires to be listened loads of times paying the right attention, that, everytime it will be listened, will let something new be perceivable behind the thick noisy blanket that often, initially, cover the most interesting outlines. Rust is the consecration of Swarm Intelligence and the confirmation of a very great year for **Nicolas Chevreux's** Ad Noiseam.

Label: Ad Noiseam

Score: 9, 5

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