

Single

tobias. - I Can't Fight the Feeling

Label / **Wagon Repair**

Cat # / WAG 040

Released / AG040

Style / Minimal techno

Rating / 1 2 3 4 ½



Well now, here's a fusion of horizons: just as Wagon Repair finally consolidates a sound for itself, along comes Tobias Freund to put a noisy, trippy feather in their cap. Tobias Freund is an artist who's been hitting his straps (and then some) with his recent releases as NSI and Odd Machine, but for me it's his solo minimal techno work as tobias. that's his best. This is techno for the heads: it's never going to chart that well or make loved-up kids split their lollipops at peaktime, but in the right hands, tracks like 'Street Knowledge' and 'Violence' are serious weapons.

And they sound amazing: 'Beat Studio One' is equal parts DJ tool and melting transistor. Turn it up and you begin to experience the sensation of having your head being slowly unzipped by the pressure of a shifting bassline. The sounds here are inorganic elements conducting massive overloads of current, but the real trick is how tobias. makes these transistor rhythm sound alive. It's the mineral made animal. 'Beat Studio Two' ramps up the pressure even further, until the valves approach bursting point and the filaments glow white. The rich noisiness of both these tools brings things close to Byetone's excellent 'Plastic Star' EP from earlier this year, but the frequencies here are hotter, fatter, and more alive.

'Go' takes us to the borders of a mad land between Autechre and Cassy, with revenant atmospheres divided into carefully machined arrhythmias placed (chopped) over a female vocal. If anyone's listening, I'd love to hear Shackleton remix this, then have Ricardo remix the remix. Guys?

'I Can't Fight the Feeling' is much closer to tobias.' house mode, a switch in which he shares an affinity with Kerri Chandler's *Computer Games* material, a soundworld made of clean, taut drum patterns welded to lean, deep house atmospheres. It's a break after all that buzzing heat, but you can still hear the 'noise'. There's also the sense that, while distinct, all four tracks are variations of each other – this is an EP of 'family resemblances' built from the same sequences. Is this a perfect minimal techno EP? Obviously, we'll have to wait for the dust to settle before we can say, but if it still sounds as good in two years as 06/07's 'Street Knowledge' does now, then I think the answer may well be... yes.

Words /
Peter Chambers

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Published /
Thu, 29 May 2008

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