

Pharaoh Overlord – Lunar Jetman (2012)

Written by bluesever

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1. *Rodent* (10:43) 2. *Palmyra Cali* (13:29) 3. *Cardinal* (04:09) [play](#) 4. *Black Horse* (16:37)
5. *Cave of Hair* (29:25)

Line-up: Jussi Lehtisalo - Guitar Janne Westerlund - Bass Tomi Leppanen – Drums

Pharaoh Overlord are a self described "Stoner Rock" side project of Circle, but don't go getting visions of Nebula and Kyuss in your head just yet: this is more like "Stoner Minimalism." Pharaoh Overlord deconstruct the standard rock song creating vast soundscapes that stretch time and space. Riffs capable of moving mountains repeat endlessly and when the silence finally comes, it's deafening. --- noquarter.net

Repetition is a difficult beast to wrangle. From the premier of Steve Reich's *Music for Eighteen Instruments*, the new wave of post-modernity screamed "excessive minimalism" in praise of its stylistic progenitor. Of course, not many people could perfectly emulate Reich's pulsing, shifting, harmonically dense style, opting for a more pure, hypnotic, unfortunately monotonous route of execution. That isn't to say the monotony is inherently bad, however, twenty-minute krautrock epics which never stray from one single bassline sort of peeves me, which is the exact problem I've had with the rest of Pharaoh Overlord's discography. These Finns, who share members with the critically acclaimed Circle, recorded some great ideas, but "Devastator"'s 9 minutes and 33 seconds of one singular classic heavy metal riff seemed a little off. I was a little apprehensive when approaching Pharaoh Overlord's new record, named after the classic video game "Lunar Jetman," though the inclusion of a seasoned member of Faust definitely piqued my interest.

I really am glad I gave this album a fair chance, as *Lunar Jetman* shows immense growth in the Pharaoh Overlord camp. Moving away from their "consistent, hypnotic repetition" route of execution, *Lunar Jetman* follows the example set forth by the Reich-ian school of thought. As layers of sound are stacked on top of the repetitive base, it begins to shift under the weight, and

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upper echelons follow suit as they begin to buckle under the sheer weight of sound above them. Eventually, you arrive at an entirely different conclusion. This sort of transformation is always a treat, especially given the trance-inducing nature of the music (and perfectly embodied in the two-part "Cave of Hair"); you snap out of it and find yourself in different surroundings. Looking down, you'll notice I imbued this album with the all-encompassing "krautrock" tag, but don't expect your standard Neu! or Amon Duul (one or II, take your pick) thoroughfare. Unlike other emulation-based "krauty" acts, Pharaoh Overlord isn't afraid to meddle in free jazz and Sabbathian doom metal, as seen in the "Cave of Hair" diptych and "Black Horse" respectively. Don't let Lunar Jetman's inherent "headiness" deter you, as it is actually a "fun" sounding record. Yes, there are long bouts of free-jazz inspired psychedelia and neo-Hawkwind noise generator meditations, but there is a sort of joyous, Springlike warmth that plagues this record, making it both infectious and memorable. ---Jon, theinarguable.com

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