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FAVOR OF THE MOTH

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2008

Ya Ho Wa 13 - Sonic Portation

I'm going to refrain from doing album reviews as much as possible on this blog, but this record is so good it compels me to proselytize.

Ya Ho Wa 13 has a great story. If you've ever heard any of that story, chances are you've been driven to find a copy of the massive 13-disc **God and Hair** box set, and have spent many blissed out hours with it. I'm not going to go through the whole story here, but just in case you haven't heard of one of the greatest and most legendary bands in rock history, here's a quick synopsis:

Jim Baker (aka Father Yod and Ya Ho Wha) founded a commune of spiritual seekers in California in the late 60s and named it the "Source Family." The Source was also the name of a raw foods/vegan restaurant that the family owned and operated (one of the first in CA). Baker was a massive man with a majestic beard who had been a champion athlete in his youth: he was a swimming, archery, and wrestling champ, and according to the Ya Ho Wa website, he even defeated the world heavyweight judo champion in 17 seconds. The Source Family grew quite large, and sustained itself as a commune for a surprisingly long time. Father Yod died tragically in 1975 in a hang gliding accident, but the musicians he played with in the various incarnations of his band (Father Yod and the Spirit of 76, Yahowha, and Ya Ho Wa 13) kept the magic alive. There are many other fascinating parts of this story that I won't go into here, but I suggest you check out Isis Aquarian's book on the history of the Source Family.

Probably the most amazing thing about the Ya Ho Wa 13 story is that they just came out with a new album (after a 33 year hiatus). I love the box set. Some albums are stronger than others, but it's a great artifact. The new album, "Sonic Portation" is, in my opinion, the band's strongest work yet.

This is an incredibly solid album from start to finish. If you're expecting some kind of weak pseudo-psych blues noodling bullshit,

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