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***Yahowa 13 -Sonic Portation***

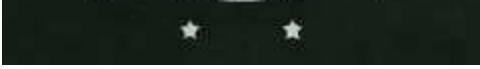
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The press material for the new Yahowa 13 record *Sonic Portation* – in true exaggerated press fashion - describes this as “the best reunion album of all time.” That’s a pretty bold claim for an independent release by a group unheard of by the vast majority of the music-buying public, but the underground legends of Yahowa 13 make a mighty strong case for their dominance.

Whatever the hippie equivalent of street cred is, Yahowa 13 is pretty much its living embodiment. The group was originally the house band for the Source Family, a group of religious seekers and vegetarian restaurateurs founded in the late ‘60s by a charismatic

 spiritual leader named Father Yod. Yahowa 13 became one of California's most prolific psychedelic rock acts of the early '70s, cranking out nine entirely improvised albums that would later become sought-after collector's pieces.

Following Father Yod's death in a 1975 hang gliding accident, the group drifted apart but stayed in touch. The mostly instrumental *Sonic Portation* reunites the band's three original core members for their first recording in more than three decades, and the years seem to have only intensified their musical passions.

The album opener "E Ah O Shin" starts with an ominous rumble and a mantra-like chant, then fades into the free-form cacophony of Octavius Aquarian's insistent drum beat, Djin Aquarian's meandering, distorted guitar and Sunflower Aquarian's easy-flowing bass line. The music rolls and swells over the track's twelve minutes, finally emerging as an Eastern-tinged groove that's as danceable as the rest of the tune is spacey. This track works as a nice capsule of the band's approach – three distinctive artists with individual styles who still manage to gell in a uniquely organic way.

The cohesion between the three musicians would be remarkable even if the songs weren't made up on the spot. Despite Yahowa 13's hippie pedigree, this is a long way from the sunny, mindless noodling usually associated with modern jam bands. An undertone of darkness runs through the album, fueled largely by Octavius' aggressive beat. The fuzzy clatter of cuts like "Traveling Ohm" and "Raga Nova" sometimes bring to mind Neil Young's apocalyptic score for *Dead Man*, but on a larger scale. There's as much, if not more, prog and metal than '60s psychedelia in the band's sound, and in this case that's a very good thing.

So is *Sonic Portation* truly the best reunion album of all time? That's arguable, obviously, but it's to Yahowa 13's great credit to say that it's not nearly as far-fetched a claim as one might assume.

Stand-out tracks: "Raga Nova," "Big Kundalini," "In and Out"

- Ira Brooker

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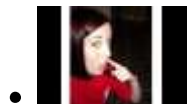
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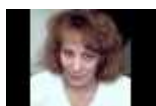
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