



YAHOWA 13 – SONIC PORTATION (Prophase) CD

Tons of popular '70s bands are reuniting, so why not one the decade's most interesting obscure cult groups? These disciples of Father Yod added music to their daily routine of meditation, free love and vegetarian food, and released at least a dozen albums of their jams, songs and experiments back in the day. The best of them were mostly instrumental, characterized more by the fearsome guitar of Djin Aquarian than the over the top philosophical "singing" of Yod himself. (Yod's rantings not only create annoying disruptions to the songs, but make a modern-day listener wonder how in the world anyone could ever have claimed this nutcase as their spiritual leader.)

This reunion, featuring Djin, Octavius and Sunflower, sounds remarkably like the better '70s records. Djin's guitar playing is inventive and often unhinged, the songs arise from powerful grooves, and the drumming tends towards tom-heavy tribal beats. The production, thankfully, while in better fidelity than the '70s recordings, doesn't sound "modern" at all. The only vocals are brief chants on variations of "YahoWa" (Yod has been dead 30 years, but the devotion to his cause has most certainly not waned). The liner notes explain the meaning of the chants and the way these songs were devised. Djin gets credit for the liner note of the year, describing the song "In And Out" as "the shortest song lyric ever written about sex, soul, and spirit."

The most intense jam here is "Traveling Ohm," which ends with the guitar expelling what sound like its dying breaths. The album suffers a bit from sameyness, as is the case with most long instrumental works, but at just over 35 minutes it doesn't wear out its welcome. Fans of the originals most certainly will not be disappointed.

(Aaron Milenski)