

WIRE

Adventures in Modern Music

(March 2009)

Yahowa 13
Sonic Portation
Prophase Music CD/Download

The musical legend of Father Yod and Ya Ho Wha 13 has grown steadily since they released nine albums from the counter of The Source restaurant in the early 1970s. The Sunset Strip eatery achieved huge celebrity, attracting the macrobiotically fuelled eminences of the time, from Brando to ex-Beatles, funding the Hollywood Hills mansion where The Source Family lived. All day long they jammed extended psychedelic rock numbers, sprawling over whole sides of LPs. Father Yod died in 1975, and individual musicians continued to record, but not until 2007 did the three musicians at the core of the Father Yod/Yahowa recordings – Dijn, Octavious and Sunflower Aquarian – reunite to gig and record, backed by equally heavy associate Sky Saxon of The Seeds.

Although musical collectives exploring avant/free/space rock are abundant these days, Yahowa 13 (as they are named on this release) can fairly assert the seniority of their vision. The music always flowed from a melding of Eastern and Western mystical traditions, and a belief in ecstatic ritual persists in tracks such as "E Ah O Shin" and "Yod Hey Vau Hey Tetractys", where chanting respectfully replaces the proclamations of Father Yod on the original albums. This sincerity gives the tracks a serenity missing from the cod weirdness of younger upstarts. Musically, the loose acid boogie of old has become tighter – but still direct and primitive – instrumental rock. Sonic Portation is a worthy addition to the group's canon and a healthy rejoinder to contemporary pretenders.

Nick Southgate