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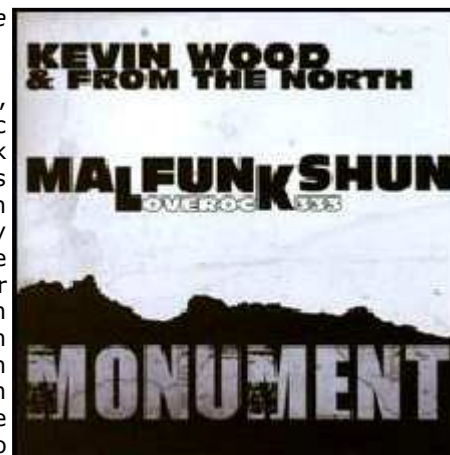
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**Kevin Wood & From the North - Malfunkshun Monument**



*Kevin Wood continues the Malfunkshun legacy*

After Kevin Wood's brother, Andrew, died of a tragic heroine overdose, Kevin took a bunch of posthumous material and wrote his own songs. Wanting to pay tribute and homage to the band that he and his brother started, he teamed up with close friends Shawn Smith on vocals, Corey Kane on bass and piano, and Regan Hagar on drums to become From The North. Similar to Malfunkshun- Kevin and



Andrew's former band- the sound is raw, gritty and breathes of sludge rock. However, Shawn's vocal work gives a bit of a doomy, grunge style that makes the music a bit more dynamic compared to Malfunkshun. Nevertheless, it is clear that Kevin's guitar work and lyrics are an ultimate reflection of his former band.

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From The North's debut album, *Malfunkshun Monument*, is full of hard rock riffs and the gritty sound that made bands like Black Sabbath and Soundgarden so popular. From the opening track, "Goodbye Just In Case," one can definitely tell from the crawling pace of the guitar that this is sludge/ stoner metal. Shawn's vocals sound a bit like Ozzy Osbourne, but the style is a lot dirtier and reminiscent of how metal sounded in the late nineties as opposed to how much cleaner bands sound as of recent times. This track isn't one for amazing solos, but it is catchy and just a great track to nod the head to. For those seeking a track with wild guitar work, try "Never Proud" which has a bit more of a progressive sound, especially with the fading effect of the vocals before the guitar breaks into a solo. "He's a Mover" has some eastern influenced riffs that add some international flavour instead of the usual American rock crunch that fans may already be bored of. "Another You" is a bit slower than the other tracks but the vocals have a lighter approach and include a creepy, depressing attitude with how the guitars sound. The piano is also a nice addition.

"Duty Bound" performs in a similar function, but it is more guitar focused and doesn't include the piano. "Man Of Golden Words" brings back the progressive feel, except this track feels more jazz progressive mixed with sludge metal. The guitar solo involved is very melodic and mournful at the same time, yet it is enjoyable to hear. Altogether it sounds like something a progressive band like Opeth would do, or even one of the lighter instrumentals from Animals as Leaders. "Make Love To My Heart" keeps the psychedelic



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qualities of the earlier tracks due to the vocal effects, but continues in the progressive moments with the guitars. The drums are almost drowned out completely because the two guitars are right in the forefront of the background and added distortion from both instruments and vocals blots everything else. Finally, "Monument" features the most piano and acts as the perfect requiem to Malfunkshun with the sombre guitar notes. This brief, but beautiful instrumental is worth waiting for after the last ten tracks of weighty grunge.

Those who already know of Malfunkshun will jump on this instantly, not only for the similarity in sound but also the tribute to a band that was considered a 'godfather' of the genre. Although the music is limited in how the instruments are used and is primarily meant for fans of grunge, sludge rock/ metal, and even doom metal along the lines of Gates of Slumber, the progressive elements from some of the guitars melodies and the piano will help bridge the gap in keeping From The North a limited enjoyment among music audiences. As much as this album crunches and crawls, there's a morbid beauty about it that is hauntingly appealing to anyone who listens to it. It is like Queens of the Stone Age meets Black Sabbath and the two had a jam session to create something that is wackingly depressive. Andrew Wood would have certainly been proud that his brother continued on in the vein of Malfunkshun's sound. May he RIP.

**(MVD)**

**Added:** October 13th 2010

**Reviewer:** [Colin McNamara](#)

**Score:** ★★★★★☆☆

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