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### AXXONN – Let's Get It Straight

by John Skibeat on 21. Feb, 2011 in [Record Reviews](#)

3

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What is a rulebook if you can't tear it up once in awhile? Brisbane's Tom Hall has the imagination to do such a thing and, now he's commandeered **AXXONN** as his solo project, latest album *Let's Get It Straight* proves he wields the power to grip it and rip it.

Previously, with No Anchor bassist Ian Rogers on board, the band were known mainly for driving out dirge-riddled electronica, but here Hall goes one stage further by combining all his musical loves in one place; taking genres as far apart from each other as black metal and J-pop (although you're doing well if you can spot that one), drone and electronica, doom and ambient rock or, as his biography reads so eloquently, "powernoise and icecream", and sinking them all deep into a soundtrack that speaks to both the mind and the soul.

It could be that Hall was feeling a bit peckish when he concocted this brutal crossover recipe but there's definitely a food theme here with titles like 'Cod & Chips', 'Choc Milk Addiction' and 'Frosties 2L' knocking about. The music itself often brings the eclectic output of 65daysofstatic, Fieldhead or, even, Mogwai to mind. Hearing skipping, downtempo rhythms being fed into a heap of electro-noise is thrilling and, in the case of 'Choc Milk Addiction', a smothered, shoegazing vocal is thrown into the mix as well – it's quite possibly how 65DOS would sound if they joined forces with The Big Pink. And yet, to focus on that one thought, ignores the rest of the musical spectrum that Hall explores. 'Golfini', for instance, combines crisply strummed and plucked acoustic guitar, then smothers it in electric fuzz, squeak and overdrive, and '10 Pound Trouble' presents us with a bravely bare field recording of territorial bird squabbles before crystallizing our minds with a hammering, resonant piano layered up with synth beats.

The imagery as you proceed through the album comes thick and fast and most of it is convincing enough to prove that this is no walk in the park. 'Slave Driver's sub-heavy cannon blasts stick you in a barren desert, watching helplessly as shells burrow their way into a sandstorm of white noise and industrial drone. Then, the eking build of 'The Slow Death' casts you adrift, oxygen-starved, floating through star-spattered space, whilst 'Perfect For Acid' ties you up in its basement and performs dark, aural torture on you as you swing back and forth through a blinding sea of strobes. It all adds up to one messed-up, wildly introspective trip.

Inevitably, there is material here that wouldn't even bond together if you used superglue, and the title-track is the standout black mark. Throwing a church organ into a jumble of 80s house music it seems is just a step too far. But then there are wham-bam tracks, like the eight-minute industrial mallet that is 'From Blacks Void', that wipe the slate clean and make you think again. It's not an easy record this – it's that banana boat ride you opt for instead of the relaxing option of simply lazing and tanning on the sand. You'll feel nauseous, you may get flung off every now and then, but it's the kind of thrill ride that leaves you stuffed full of adrenaline, gasping for breath and with a mile-wide smile on your kisser.

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