



Below The Dead Ones (Bedroom Suck)

Brisbane's Axxonn have always invited the suspicion that the development of their career has somewhat outpaced the development of their music. A wilfully prolific and ambitious outfit, the band toured Europe on the basis of only a handful of live performances and two EPs and will now be releasing two full-length albums in the next six months. It's fortunate, then, that the band's debut album, *Below The Dead Ones*, is such a focussed and realised release.

A conscious exploration of the band's origins as a drone act released via cassette on local label Bedroom Suck, *Below The Dead Ones* does an admirable job of temporarily silencing the band's detractors. The album builds on the stylistic foundation of shimmering beauty and scabrous noise laid by debut EP *Should You Fear Hell?* but band mainman Tom Hall has greatly expanded on the band's initial dynamic range with more sophisticated textures and compositional approaches.

Opener 'Urine Mote' gradually expands across the course of its ten minutes from fuzzed-out drones into blissful synth textures while, elsewhere, 'Drone Study 1' features the kind of abstracted electronic loops reminiscent of Hall's solo compositions and 'Deficite' more intelligently applies the percussion somewhat naively employed for the band's *Masters Of The Epic Day* release. The entirety of the album, meanwhile, reveals a refined sense of structure not present in the band's prior work.

The only issue anyone could realistically take exception with is Axxonn's somewhat bizarre choice of format – but, in actuality, the band's decision to release on cassette constitutes something greater than a gimmick. A backward, impractical and dated medium, cassette somehow lends a sense of rough-hewn intimacy and significance to Axxonn's debut album. It makes the album something secret and personal – a joy only a handful of listeners will ever know.

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