

Big Black Delta - Big Black Delta (2013)

Written by bluesever

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1. *Put the Gun on the Floor* 2. *Side of the Road* 3. *Huggin & Kissin* 4. *Capsize* 5. *Money Rain Down* 6. *Betamax* 7. *The Zebra* 8. *Ifuckingloveyou* 9. *X22* 10. *Dreary Moon* 11. *Pb3* 12. *Into the Night* 13. *Love You This Summer* Jonathan Bates – performer, composer, producent Lars Horntveth - clarinet (bass), flute

Jonathan Bates doesn't screw around with the opening track of his solo project Big Black Delta's self-titled debut album. 'Put The Gun On The Floor' drops a rough and pulsing bass-line immediately. The former front man of the now expired Mellowdrone revisits these bass parts for most of the album and threads them with crisp, complex beats that seem to catch at all the right places. Much of the album's tracks are drenched in synth beyond recognition. Some tracks (see 'Side of the Road') have a vocal clarity that inspires accessibility, but accessibility doesn't appear to be what Bates is aiming for.

Instead, he seems to be looking for a space outside his previous duties with his Los Angeles lo-fi outfit. Mellowdrone's music experimented with the rock-band formula, whereas Big Black Delta is his vehicle for exploring the boundaries of genre-defying electronica.

Anthemic 'Capsize' provides a highlight with its crunchy bass sweeping widely under a strong, clear top end. 'Money Rain Down' incorporates brass and woodwind samples into a bright 80's-revival pop song with surprising appropriateness. The album takes a strange turn later on with 'IFUCKINGLOVEYOU' and 'x22', which have fierce enough drums to portray a pseudo-punk vibe. From here on, the Bates fails to find a real sense of album – not surprising really, given that the LP is cobbled together from eight songs remastered from previous EP releases, and only five new ones created especially for this release. While he uncovers some curious and cool ways to combine sounds, the second half of his record comes across as disjointed. As a result, Big Black Delta is one of those albums that suffers as a whole, but hard

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core fans should be able to find a number of tracks worth hitting 'repeat' for. ---Leigh McDonald, vulturemagazine.com.au

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