

WHITE

BLISTRAP + Hunter Gracchus

The Shakespeare, Gibraltar St, Sheffield.

April 28th. 8pm. £4 / 3

Coming out of the self-styled "No Beijing" movement. Founder and guitarist/noisemaker Shou Wang and drummer/noisemaker Shenggy (aka Shen Jing) recorded under the patronage of Blixa Bargeld at the Einsturzende Neubauten studio. There's no doubt that the duo's powerful music, plus the boost that such a high-profile supporter should bring, will bring White to the attention of listeners worldwide. But certainly, theirs is no pop music, and harkens back to Neubauten's early rust-caked explorations, with a similar mixture of cold artifice and warm organic spirit.

Shou Wang founded White a couple of years ago, while still continuing his band Carsick Cars. White originally began as an open project to allow him to work with different musicians and in a wide variety of styles, and that spirit is still active: in May, a seven-person lineup performed a piece Shou wrote for Beijing's Midi Festival. In late 2005, however, Shou met Shenggy, and the two hit it off so well that White is now primarily a duo. Shenggy was coming off nearly eight years of playing with the girl group Hang on the Box, and in 2006, she says, "quit the old band to start a totally new musical life."

Both have been heavily influenced by avant-garde musicians, and that inspiration has driven them toward White's experimentation as an outlet from their more rockist bands. Amazingly, just last year White were privileged to perform with a number of high-profile artists, including Glenn Branca, Alvin Curran and Elliott Sharp. Inspired by Branca, Throbbing Gristle, and Einsturzende Neubauten .

"Beck, Giust and Drury deliver a tripartite blitzkrieg of full-spectrum dominance skronk, mind-bending improv noise, and a rhythmic assault ranging from butterfly light to neutron star heavy. In a good way, that is. A pantechicon of dionysian treats for the synapses, sinuses and bowels: you're worth it!" *Zali Krishna - Klinker, London.*

"Blistrap had a dark funk - a groove out of percussive arcs and balloons tied together with sneaky riffs into a tower of noise that had me rocking and howling." *Grind Sight Open Eye, Edinburgh.*

The highlight of the evening [Singing Knives all-dayer, 20th Dec 08] was The Hunter Gracchus, whose debut slab of vinyl was released on French label Chironex late 2008 (a previous CDR was available on Singing Knives). Many musicians fill the far end of the room. Cymbal scraping is accompanied by elongated guitar resonance that set an eerie part-machine sound. Each musician in turn enters with tumbling coherence. Shattered drums work beautifully against intricate oud plucking (à la Derek Bailey). Sine wave drones issue forth over and underneath the overall splatter. Peppered clangs and a seemingly endless array of world-spanning instruments are blown and hit by a mass of long dark brown hair. Harmonium bellows respire with soothing volume underneath a wondrous percussive journey taken by the elaborately bearded percussionist. He contorts in sinuous movements like a psychedelic octopus playing clams. What appears to be a small banjo is introduced with an elevated feel. As the movement enters its climax a wall of noise issues forth, yet all musicians seem to be entwined in some shared trip of improvised glory. The second movement is begged into play by an eager crowd. This time there is a balance of structured rhythm that is absorbed, rejected and revisited amongst

structured rhythm that is absorbed, rejected and revisited amongst various waves of freak-out. The group never merely sprawls into abandoned noise, but keeps a unified expression through a chaotic mix of style and technique. This was one of the most successful ensemble improv sessions I have seen for a long while, and I came away truly awe-struck.

Peter Francis Taylor, Foxy Digitalis

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<http://www.myspace.com/whitebeijing>

<http://www.myspace.com/blistrap>

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