

AUDIO

CD



GIANT BRAIN

“thorn of thrones”

After their first record, *Plume*, garnered some very good reviews from some unexpected sources—who would expect a loop-and-rock quasi-Kraut record to appeal to Stonerrock.com readers?—the boys in **Giant Brain** figured it was time to make a new one. Brothers **Andy** and **Al Sutton** and **Philip Durr** enlisted the talents of one **Eric Hoegemeyer**, who had previously lent his drumming services to some of the songs on *Plume*. As the trio became a quartet, and **Andy** moved from the Motor City to Washington, D.C. (Detroit lost the No. 1 spot as the Murder Capital, so he reckoned he had to move... to the new No. 1), the new album, *Thorn of Thrones*, became even more of an experiment of action-reaction-thesis-synthesis than **Giant Brain**'s first effort had been. The basic modus operandi of the first album was to establish a basic premise, deconstruct, demolish and re-construct it. On *Thorn of Thrones* this exercise was exaggerated by geographical separation. "It became a game of 'here's my idea, I'll email it to you, you react, I'll react, Hell! everybody'll react!" explains guitarist **Philip Durr** (**Big Chief**, **Thornetta Davis**, **Five Horse Johnson**, **Luder**), "so the recording became even more improvisational... most of the songs started out as rhythmic loops, no keys, no nothing."

The addition of **Eric Hoegemeyer** (he last produced **Gideon Smith's** "South Side of the Moon") added another dimension to the **Giant Brain** Sound. **Eric** just happens to be not only one of the most sought-after beat-buders, programmers and producers in the Detroit area, but he's a bit of an instrumental savant. "**Eric** is one of those people who can proficiently play any instrument you place in front of him within minutes of seeing it for the first time... disgusting!" says bassist and GB-ideologue **Andy Sutton**. **Eric's** musician- and programmer-led to more in-studio-improvisation, which had always been a major part of the **Giant Brain**. "It may not be apparent at first listen," says **Al Sutton** (producer: **Big Chief**, **Laughing Hyenas**, **Don Caballero**, **Kid Rock**), "but the songs on *Thorn of Thrones* are very organic. Asong like 'Gooser' started with just a small percussion loop. Phil basically jammed on it for some time, then **Eric** immediately sat behind a drum kit, and the song started to take shape. Or **Relentful Resentless**, where Phil and I drove to D.C., recorded **Andy's** bass and a simple guitar line in his living room, and **Eric** then improvised the keyboard stabs live a few weeks later in Detroit. Things like that happened often and over time, and changed the nature of the songs constantly." Also, as Phil adds, "with **Eric** around, there was less need to bring in guest musicians, which of course didn't stop us from doing so, anyway." Case in point, the inclusion of **Don Caballero** legend and every indie-rock drummer's wet dream, **Damon Che** on two of *Thorn of Thrones* tracks, 'Asian Love Song, What?' and 'Space Mannequin,' and *Small Stone Record's* own chanteuse, **Slot's Sue Lott**. "With **Damon**, we let him hear the track once... then we recorded him twice. That's it. We wanted the immediacy, his reaction to our music, and that's exactly what we got. **Sue's** been a friend for years, we've had a mutual admiration society for that time, so when we needed THATsound, there was no one else we would call," says **Eric**.

Thorn of Thrones will surprise fans of **Giant Brain** earlier work. While it retains the Teuto-American synergy, those Detroit-cum-Dortmund freak-out elements of *Plume*, it is a darker, more dynamic record than its older brother. Even the lighter moments disguise a cynicism that wasn't present on the first album, as exemplified by the lone **GB** song to ever feature lyrics, 'Empyrian.' It may seem airy at first, but the lyrics are anything but... Some have attributed this new-found skepticism and doubt to the current state of the world, and specifically the current state of disarray in the Motor City. We here at **Small Stone** wouldn't know about that, but we feel that regardlessly, the sky will be blue, the flowers will bloom, and **Giant Brain** makes great records.

TRACKS	CREDITS
1) RELENTFUL RESENTLESS	GIANTBRAIN:
2) THIS IS WHERE THE ROBOT ESCAPES HIS EVIL CAPTOR, FINDS RAYGUN, PLOTS REVENGE	ANDY SUTTON: BASS, LOOPS, PROGRAMMING, VOCALS
3) ASIAN LOVE SONG WHAT?	AL SUTTON: LOOPS, PROGRAMMING, EDITING, KEYBOARDS, VOCALS, PERCUSSION
4) EMPYRIAN	ERIC HOEGEMEYER: DRUMS, PERCUSSION, PROGRAMMING, EDITING, KEYBOARDS
5) PHONES	PHILIP DURR: GUITARS, BASS, KEYBOARDS, MELODICA
6) GOOSER	GUEST MUSICIANS:
7) SPACE MANNEQUIN	DAMON CHE: DRUMSON 'ASIAN LOVE SONG, WHAT?' & 'SPACE MANNEQUIN'
8) WATER-BORED	SUE LOTT: VOCALSON 'EMPYRIAN'
9) DROWNER	RECORDED BY AL & ERIC @ RUSTBELT STUDIOS.
	PRODUCED BY AL & ERIC.
	MASTERED BY CHRIS GOOSMAN @ BASELINE AUDIO.
	ARTWORK BY MARK DANCEY.

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