

Glyn Bigga Bush

Sunken Fowl Stories

Schamoni Musik/Lion Head DL/LP

"I used not to need anyone/Just to myself/*Stories*" booms a mahogany-voiced sample around which the opening track of *Sunken Fowl Stories* builds. As it turns out, the title of the song – "Stories" – is apt.

Glyn Bush is a man of many pseudonyms; he began his creative life as a member of Original Rockers, renamed Rockers Hi-Fi at the request of Augustus Pablo. These earlier incarnations were more dub orientated – 1995's *Rockers To Rockers* being their finest work – and moved gradually towards post-trip-hop experimentalism (see *Overproof* from 1998). Bush's work as Lightning Head is less fuggy all round and more suited to the dancefloor, while other projects The Dandelion Set and Magic Drum Orchestra are just as different again – the former have racked up several releases of chilled, psychedelic pop while the latter specialise in modified Afro-Caribbean beats.

What links Bush's multiple guises is his willingness not only to venture towards the sonic fringes, but to fully inhabit these shady spaces, to set up camp and entice the listener to join him there. These outfits have tended however to lack a narrative voice or sense of dramatic progression. By contrast

Bush populates the darkened spaces of his new album, crafted almost entirely out of samples sourced from charity shop and car boot sale vinyl, with characters – or rather with *character*. He builds ambiguous storylines from dialogue bent and snapped into place.

There is also his cinematic wit. Bush places "Carnaby St Caper", which flips and loops sections of a brassy version of The Beatles' "Baby You're A Rich Man", next to "Gongs2Go", where handclaps bristle above repeated strikes of the titular instrument. You feel privy to the odd actions of a dashing protagonist, gleefully purchasing a suit in a bustling 1960s tailors before finding himself being fed to a shark in the private aquarium of some villain. These juxtapositions also contribute to the sense of light and shadow throughout; the murk and crackle of sampled strings contrast the grinning pomp of plundered brass. On "Jazz Pact" and "Feelin Dank" for example, these moods roll together seamlessly.

It's easy to take for granted the psychedelic nature of editing in cinema. The process makes odd and illogical narrative jumps, both temporally and spatially, but a successful mastery of the medium ensures the watcher never questions the journey. Bush does the same here; his quick cuts and strange samples of dialogue create

colour where there would only have been black and white. "Art Slab" wobbles and sashays dustily through an Eastern bazaar before "Teahead Of Time" drops in and a voice – perhaps the same rich baritone from earlier – asks, "*Is anyone recording?/ There's no provision for recording?*". The surprise is not that we are confused, it's that we aren't. Instead of the sweaty walls of a club, these 21 sample based pieces evoke a broken John Barry world of lost 60s modernism. This can also be found in previous creations: "Mish Mash" from his Rockers Hi-Fi period is, while primarily dubby and clubby, drenched in filmic noir. But they do not engage in quite the same way – most of *Sunken Fowl Stories* sounds like a supercut of moments from Hollywood movies where a spy creeps through the darkened, afterhours premises of spurious multinational corporations.

As the first side ends, the vocal of "Now There's Pain" drifts upwards and it's a repurposed hypnosis tape which, above the nocturnal chime and a looped fragment of female voices, takes the form of a hushed seduction rather than a piece of spliced self-help: "*OK, lets do this/You close your eyes/You're feeling goooood*". Behind it, the samples flit between easy listening and ambient to menacing effect.

Bush creates momentary grooves which

pull the body towards motion before quickly spiralling off into something new and tense. The rhythms of these pieces knock them sideways into darker, more curious spaces. On "Bontempi Ventures" you come fully to terms with the familiar exoticism he is channelling; it's simultaneously parochial and entirely alien – like a brilliant but dusty samba record stumbled across in a charity shop, or a steel drum ensemble playing outside Manchester's drizzly Arndale Centre. He's come close to this before: both 2014's self-titled Magic Drum Orchestra album and Bigga Bush's 2017 EP *Melody & Electronics* exude a similar sense of the extrinsic.

But *Sunken Fowl Stories* forces his hand in this regard – the rhythm is derived directly from his manipulation of a narrow selection of source materials – and the process has resulted in his most successful work to date. It's as though by constructing the album entirely out of car boot loot and charity shop treasure, he has stretched a previously idle creative muscle. In binding together these bits of brass kitsch and spoken word strangeness, Bush has maintained a degree of depth and engagement only fleetingly achieved in his other guises. And by narrowing his palette in this way, he has allowed the stories to take centre stage. □

British dub eccentric Glyn Bigga Bush embarks on a picaresque travelogue through a parallel Britain. By Spenser Tomson

These foalish things: Glyn Bigga Bush

