



THE DEAD SCIENCE

Villainaire

CONSTELLATION RECORDS
CST054 CD/180gLP

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Seattle-based **The Dead Science** has created a majestic, ornate and soaring collection of postpunk avantpop on this, their fourth full-length album, and their first for Constellation. *Villainaire* is a brilliant song cycle driven by layers of Sam Mickens' vibrato-laden voice, dark lyricism and sterling guitar work. Bassist (acoustic and electric) Jherek Bischeff and drummer Nick Tamburro anchor the tunes with endlessly inventive polyrhythmic suppleness. Together the trio unleashes a truly unique sound, intensely literate in both word and sound, with a controlled and commanding fury.

The songs on *Villainaire* range from epic orchestral pop to sinister jazz-rock to weary, soul-bleached balladry. Sam Mickens writes about "moral pragmatism and experimental moral nihilism, black-out drunkenness and its psychic and emotional repercussions, and the continuum of baroque fantasy and stark reality" - all delivered with inimitable, seductive, and at times disturbing operatics. Fans of Shudder To Think, Scott Walker, Deerhoof, Xiu Xiu, Blonde Redhead and/or US Maple should find deep and abiding pleasure in *Villainaire*.

Album opener "Throne Of Blood (The Jump Off)" indeed jumps out of the gate, with pumping bass and drum work, interwoven vocals and fantastic staccato syncopation - with a lovely deconstructed bridge featuring a brief modernist string arrangement. The song (also featured on the A-Side of a 7" single originally issued by Constellation as a tour-only item in spring 2008 and now available through normal distribution channels) encapsulates many of the elements and influences that shape the rest of the album's compositions. "The Dancing Destroyer" explodes with a pummeling time signature and furious drum work, driving towards some awesome horn stabs and briefly yielding to a cascading interlude of waterfall guitar chords before reprising the madness. "Make Mine Marvel" is a relentless little pop masterpiece highlighted by a swirling string arrangement. "Monster Island Czars" opens with zithery guitar downstrokes set against a ferocious bowed contrabass, decomposing into a sort of free-jazz-meets-house bridge, followed by some beautifully fried lead guitar in damaged call-and-response with brass and strings - all in the first two minutes; a twisted, harmonised vocal clearing ensues, before the lead guitar reappears and blazes through a final solo to bring the band slamming back to the finish line. The band provides some respite with the short, tremulous ballad "Lamentable", and closes Side One with the insistent march of "Death Duel Productions". We'll spare you track-by-track descriptions of Side Two, except to say that the band stretches out a little more, with a couple of dark slowdances lending the album's second half a more introspective but no less intense vibe.

Villainaire was superbly recorded and mixed by band member Jherek, and features contributions from a number of guest players, including Shudder To Think's Criag Wedren and Celebration's Katrina Ford on additional vocals. The album is available on CD and deluxe 180gLP, in custom-printed jackets of white and gold ink on heavy black artstock paper; the LP version is screen-printed by hand. The album is of course, at this stage in world history, also widely available as a digital download (even for actual cash money that flows back to that artist, if one is inclined to support such quaint notions).

The Dead Science will be touring throughout North America and Europe in support of the record release. Thanks for listening.



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