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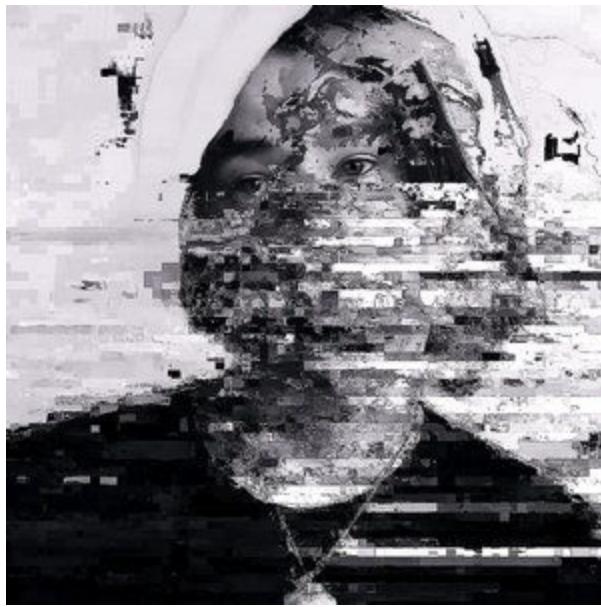
Derek Piotr's *Grunt* isn't so much about the sound as it is about the spirit of the noise.

Grunt

Derek Piotr
DPSR
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The word "grunt" comes across as rather guttural and primitive. People use it to describe utterances that are the polar opposite of articulate. The aesthetic of a grunt is simplistic, organic, and probably the last thing anyone would use to describe heavily processed electronic glitch music. The music that sound sculptor Derek Piotr makes comes from an unrecognizable future where two robots are experiencing a communications breakdown through a million light-years of fiber optic cable.

On first thought, a more fitting title for Derek Piotr's latest collection would be *Glitch* rather than *Grunt*. But when you step back and take a look at the nature of the album -- 21 tracks spanning 35 minutes -- this caveman utterance suddenly doesn't seem all that ill-fitting. Not only are these pieces very brief, but they sometimes change direction completely before they've concluded. Hit it, quit, on to the next one. They are, for our purposes here, miniature digital grunts.

With the exception of the final track, everything on *Grunt* lasts from half-a-minute to two-and-a-half minutes tops. The last track is a remix of "Redirect", a number that appears early in the album. Remixed -- or, rather, re-*directed* -- by fellow noise artist Kevin Drumm, it lasts well

over three minutes and rests on a soft bed of static. If that strikes you as a bit of a paradox, then prepare yourself for the briar patch that is Derek Piotr's music. Sounds, be they natural or artificial in origin, interrupt one another like subatomic particles on a high-speed collision course.

Sounds that you thought would simulate a voice or a violin (see tracks like "Voice I", "Voice II", "Violin I", and "Violin II") have been distorted and mangled beyond recognition. One in a while, Piotr even nails down a groove, as he does on "Despot". Sure it's disjointed and takes longer than most standard beats to loop, but a pulse is there, and you can almost tap your foot along with it.

There is a guest vocal appearance from Forest People Pop on "Pure", but it goes by so quickly that you might miss it if you aren't paying attention (all told, less than 60 seconds of the track). For there, by the grace of glitch, goes another grunt. Without Kevin Drumm's remix, *Grunt* just barely clears the half-hour mark. But overall length, the length of the tracks, and the names of the tracks are all rather arbitrary.

As is the case with some of Drumm's releases, you are listening to an entire album rather than a collection of songs. Your mind is far more likely to process *Grunt* as one bulging collage of sound rather than 21 little pieces. And as far as sculptures of noise are concerned, this one is equipped with all of the hypnotic powers of its contemporaries. To say that Derek Piotr has a reached a point of transcendence is an overestimation, but it's not an exaggeration to say that he's at least pointed in that direction.