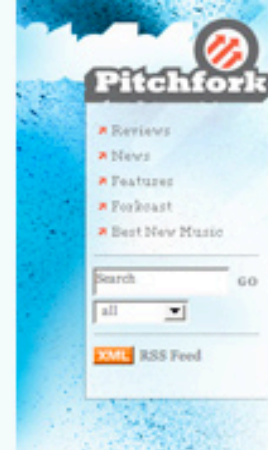




## Monotrack Trueno Oscuro [Load; 2007]

Rating: 7.3

- Buy it from Insound
- Download it from Emusic
- Digg this article
- Add to del.icio.us



When I first saw Monotrack at 2004's inaugural No Fun Fest, the trio was hunkered over tables, poking at laptops and twiddling mixer knobs. The setup made sense; since Carlos Giffoni's solo work to that point consisted primarily of electronic-based noise, it figured he would surround himself with like-minded sound-makers in a group setting.

It turns out that show was an anomaly-- Monotrack's roots actually lie more in fractured punk rock than experimental noise. Since forming in Miami in 1998 (and moving to New York in 2000), they have produced a slew of releases exploring many sonic styles and instrumental configurations. But most often, the group starts from a foundation of guitar, bass, and drums. Last year's *Xprmntl Lvrs* gave the most balanced version of Monotrack's noise/rock amalgam, with punkish beats and semi-melodic vocals grafted to harsh electronics and guitar distortion.

*Trueno Oscuro* (which means "Dark Thunder") also stitches rock and noise into one monstrous hybrid, but leans farther toward the rock side than any previous Monotrack release: Nearly every song here has a big, bold beat, supplied by the mix-dominating pound of drummer Roger Rimada. On top of that huge pulse, Giffoni and bassist/vocalist Nancy Garcia spin thorny noise, sauntering bass, and rhythmic vocal chants. This spastic combination can produce oddly funky tunes-- a kind of skewed dance-noise akin to the fractured chug of RTX, the disco damage of Ciccone Youth, or even the hardcore crunch of Atari Teenage Riot.

There's also something sultry and even seductive about the way Monotrack swings and sways here, especially during the songs sung by Garcia. On "Big N", her breathy half-spoken vocals cascade over Ramada's hip-hop beat like syrup over pancakes, while her urgent yelps at the close of "Muddy Thunder" bewitch like Lydia Lunch's best screams. On the only cut without drums, "Under My Arm", she tentatively whispers over whirring drone, her voice a siren as entrancing as Kim Gordon's on Sonic Youth's "Shadow of a Doubt".

When Rimada and Giffoni sing, Monotrack's sound gets a little less unpredictable. The marching thump of "Ballad of Lechon", DNA-like stop/start of "Cafu y Kaka", and metallic stomp of "Mar Roja" are all meaty enough on their own, but strung together they feel like blurry photocopies of each other. But whatever repetition *Trueno Oscuro* suffers from is easily offset by the record's many high points, making for another unique entry in Monotrack's rainbow-colored catalog.

URL: [www.pitchforkmedia.com/article/record\\_review/42830-trueno-oscur](http://www.pitchforkmedia.com/article/record_review/42830-trueno-oscur)  
-Marc Masters, May 18, 2007