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ORAC-09
Bruno Pronsato
Silver Cities
release date: July 15, 2004.

In another lifetime, Bruno Pronsato (Seattle producer Steven Ford) drummed for Texas speed-metal/punks Voice Of Reason. But then he had his head split open by My Bloody Valentine, Gang Of Four, Electric Company, death-metal titans like Venom, Slayer, and Napalm Death. "My childhood was filled with music, but [Slayer's] Haunting the Chapel and Hell Awaits just somehow transported me to some weirder level," Ford recounts. "It somehow made it okay to just be as free as possible with music. And from the time I was 14 or 15, it was a steady process of finding out and getting deeper and deeper into people who were, in my opinion, really shaping the future of music."

After Voice Of Reason split, there followed a period of musical disenchantment, during which Ford moved to Seattle in 1998. There he commenced making computer-based music. Incorporating the above influences along with inspiration from European atonalists like Anton Webern and Arnold Schoenberg, Ford gravitated toward microsound, taking the name Bobby Karate to chop out intricately designed glitchscapes that unpredictably fizz and crackle like the best output from the Raster-Noton and Mille Plateaux labels.

While establishing his rep as Seattle's foremost sculptor of powerful, electronic abstractions, Ford dabbled with dance music production under the Bruno Pronsato moniker. What began as a lubricious lark to get the ladies bumpin' and grindin' became Ford's primary obsession. Over the last year, Bruno's live sets emerged as fist-pumping demonstrations of heady sound design and hedonism.

Listened to on headphones, this album will turn your gray matter purple and periwinkle with its panoply of unusual organic and digital sounds deftly arranged as if by a G4-tanned Teo Macero. Heard on a big club system, Silver Cities—especially hard-driving Pantytec-with-a-PhD stompers like "Küche" and "Read Me"—will get thongs snapping in approval while fellow producers in the house will marvel at the wealth of exploratory textures and bizarre moods animating cuts like "Women In Large Coats" and "Viaje A La Luna." Whether you scratch your chin or shake your ass to it, Silver Cities gives you more sonic nutrition than you deserve over its 43 minutes. Few minimal tech-house full-lengths deliver such maximal impact.

"One of the reasons techno or minimal techno is such a force in my life," Ford says, "is because it is music that is working with a predefined set of rules, namely 4/4 time. Much like the 12-tone composers who had to work within their tone rows, techno producers are also working within a set of boundaries. I think it's quite a challenge to come up with something creative within a set of pre-established rules. It makes me think a little harder about what I can do."

Silver Cities offers irrefutable proof of what Bruno Pronsato can do. In this album's wake, tech-house's tried-and-true formulas suddenly seem under-cooked.

—Dave Segal

1. Women in Large Coats
2. Cordo-Va
3. All Night Blah, Blah
4. Viaje a la Luna
5. Küche
6. Read_Me
7. Pedestrian Plan
8. The Listen Pil
9. No Love

mastered by Twerk.
2x12" vinyl and compact disc.

distributed by **●KOMPAKT**