

Petrozavodsk

Forest Fire

School Of The Arts DL/LP

In 1977, the citizens of Petrozavodsk experienced a close encounter as 48 jellyfish-shaped flying objects appeared in the night sky above the Russian city. The happening has never been satisfactorily explained, and the Petrozavodsk Phenomenon (as it became known) has since entered into ufology mythos.

Based in Spain and Portugal, it is unclear whether the name chosen by instrumental drone merchants Petrozavodsk refers to that event or is simply a tribute to drummer Ivan Zoloto's birthplace – but there are lines to be drawn between the phenomenon, the band and the noise they make. *Forest Fire* is released via the School Of The Arts label, run by Zoloto. His previous label – the DIY tape imprint Full Of Nothing – did excellent work in supporting Russian experimental musicians until its dissolution sometime around 2017. Now living in Barcelona, along with running School Of The Arts, Zoloto is joined on *Forest Fire* by Anton Vasin (guitar) and Matvei Podgornov (bass).

Geographical connections aside, the band create the same sense of foreboding as the 1977 manifestation. Their 2020 debut set *Winter War* (also released on School Of The Arts) featured two 18 minute tracks of the kind of sonic decomposition and resurrection favoured by the likes of Boris and Sunn O))). *Forest Fire* builds on that work. Plus, by calling in UK based noise veteran Ren Schofield (aka Container) to collaborate on the album's opener "Forest Fire I", Petrozavodsk conjure up a pretty good impression of what it might feel like to be visited by aliens. Over its 12 minute run, the team crash and tumble over what sounds like a chainsaw losing its mind.

For the remaining two tracks – "Forest II" and "Fire" – Petrozavodsk manufacture slabs of unrelenting pressure using churning guitar, reverb-heavy drums and disorientating electronic tones. Drenched in dread, *Forest Fire* is a powerful return.

Simon Coates