

Brainwashed - Seaworthy + Matt Rösner, "Two Lakes"

Written by Craig Dunton

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Last year I reviewed Seaworthy's [1897](#), in which I was fascinated by Cameron Webb's careful balance of field recordings and traditional musicianship, often working together to create a sound where nature itself was the musical instrument. Working with like-minded artist Matt Rösner, the two use a similar approach, and the result is a work of the same spirit, but a different sound.

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The album feels as much like ecological research as it does a piece of music. Based upon the duo's careful field recordings of the ecosystems at two coastal lakes in Australia, the results feel as much musically as it does as a living, breathing organism. They mostly mix unprocessed field recordings with treated ones, sometimes with pure musical accompaniment and other times alone.

Most are more of a hybrid, such as the shimmering drone of "Meroo Sedgeland Pt. 1," which marries subtle crackles of water, treated and natural, first with an expansive, gentle ebow drone that seems to stretch far into the horizon. Once the drone retreats, what remains is the sound of insects and frogs amongst the marshland, eventually augmented with gentle, sparse acoustic guitar. "Meroo Forest" is of similar character, combining birdsongs with a lower, sustained tone. Vibrating acoustic guitar strings add a subtle touch to what is more of an instrumental and nature duet.

The longer "Termeil Dunes" also carefully blends sparse, but deliberate tones, initially alone, but then paired with field recordings in a beautiful synthesis. "Meroo Sedgeland Pt. 2" is another where it is difficult to distinguish where the music begins and the nature ends, which is nothing

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but a compliment to the strength in which Webb and Rosner are able to marry the two. There seems to be a quiet digital texture carefully weaved between the sounds of nature around it, but it is so subtle it is nearly impossible to discern.

On other pieces, the sound of traditional instruments form the focus. "Meroo Stream" is a short piece that focuses on acoustic guitar plucking with occasional, but very subtle, treatments and the gentle sound of water behind it. The closing "Meroo Lake Pt. 2" is purely guitar for the first half of the piece, before it falls away to leave only the sound of water splashing about in one of the few situations in which the human and the natural sounds are distinct from one another

Two Lakes sounds like the work of four artists: Webb, Rösner, and each lake, as both the traditional playing of instruments and the calm sounds of nature contribute equally to the final product. There is a sense of life and timelessness that pervades the work and makes it perhaps one of the best statements of environmentalism possible, because rather than being just rhetoric, it captures the actual essence of nature amongst the songs.

samples:

- [Meroo Sedgeland Pt. 1](#)
- [Meroo Sedgeland Pt. 2](#)
- [Termiel Dunes](#)