

Brainwashed - Netherworld, "Over the Summit"

Written by Justin Patrick

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The album opens with the title track, a long piece brooding with psychological horror. Panning back and forth with ominous repetition it digs into me, beneath the surface, and I want to shed my skin. Oppressive and claustrophobic I clamor for air. This song feels like the moment of anxiety just before a peak experience. Once the summit of the mountain is reached however, the exultation and triumph incumbent upon a job well done kicks in and the rest of the album is crisp, vast, stretching without pause from horizon to horizon, clear as the hoarfrost on the arctic tundra.

[Glacial Movements](#)

Image

In common with the rest of the deep and benevolent ambience presented on the album "Aurora Performs It's Last Show" captures expansive feelings of freedom by recreating the sounds of unbounded open space. Alessandro Tedeschi, who runs the Glacial Movements label, here presents his own distillation of sounds from the Northern Lights. It is another fine example of the isolationist aesthetic the label specializes in. A slow cycling of notes opens the song, which exists in the nether regions of dawn or twilight, a liminal space between regions. Leaking into the washed out glissandos is a corrupt transmission, a broken voice speaking through static. As regular readers may remember, I'm a big fan of the use of radio broadcasts, whether sampled or sourced live during a performance, in the creation of music. And while this tactic or gimmick doesn't work with everything, when done well, it often produces startling results. On this piece it is used in minimal amounts, while still giving the song added texture and depth.

The centerpiece of the album is "Iceblink - Aurora Borealis Mix." A long lulling loop, resonant on the low end, is caressed by a cold northern wind. Higher octaves gradually emerge, short but repeating overtones, which harmonize with the ever present drone. Sprinkles of brittle bells and the cracking of ice are the only dramatic events in this piece which is less about narrative than about spatial awareness. "Crystallize Words" can rest comfortably alongside the classics of dark

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ambient. Low in the background or off in the distance, the pounding a bass drum brings back for a moment the sense of impending dread felt while listening to the title number—but it is not as all consuming. Symphonic strains swirl through the cold, as a faint voice murmurs, perhaps a memory or a ghost.

"Thoughts Locked In The Ice" give this listener some breathing space again. The pauses, gaps, and brief snippets of near silence are like breaks between snow storms, the clear terrain between deep blankets and heavy drifts. One of the most meditative pieces on the album, the simple textures recur over and over again, faithful as a treasured mantra. The last piece, "Iperborea," is the most otherworldly of the bunch, and rightly so as the title of the song is Italian for Hyperborean. To the ancient Greeks Hyperborea was the land in the far north where the sun shined for 24 hours a day. The steady pulses and shimmers of this song and this album took me to a similar place: both bright and cold.

samples:

- [Over The Summit](#)
- [Aurora Performs Its Last Show](#)
- [Iceblink - Aurora Borealis Mix](#)