

Brainwashed - Lull, "Like a Slow River"

Written by Simon Marshall-Jones

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Mick Harris' latest release as Lull is a quiet and stately album, the sounds at times being barely above a whisper, a state of affairs entirely in keeping with the motivating philosophy behind the Italian label Glacial Movements i.e., making us aware of the paradoxically fragile strength and crystalline beauty of the polar regions before it's too late.

[Glacial Movements](#)

The sussurating washes gently ebb and flow in frozen cadence, just like a floe-laden river in the Arctic, while simultaneously deep bass rumbles just on the edge of hearing run like submarine currents beneath the ice-bedecked surface. Riding the surface are the keening howls of biting winds and the hollow windings of tunnel-blown air. Those bass currents run fathoms deep while the frail ice above grinds and cracks between the walls of snow-bright chasms, reflecting pristine sunlight back into the cold depths of space. Just like the slow Arctic rivers too, this is in no particular hurry to get anywhere. Time in a place like this doesn't mean much in the grand scheme of things, where the accumulation of snow and ice forming the sculptural glaciers and cliffs took slow incremental millennia measured in millimeters, a place where an entire continent has the patience of geology. This is deep time, a time that bears no reference to the human; likewise its beauty, a quality forever beyond the reach of all but the most determined explorer, even in the 21st century. In perhaps an accidental coincidence (or perhaps, as is likely, a case of reading too much into things), each of the tracks gets progressively shorter and shorter, ranging from 14:33 down to 4:39, in a reflection perhaps of how the southern and northern continents, that have slowly evolved and remained practically static over the millennia are now, suddenly, due to our ignorance and ill-conceived environmental blindness, becoming compromised and fast disappearing—a slight conceit on my part maybe but nevertheless I feel it an observation worth pointing out.

Harris calls forth frozen atmospheres and ice-bound river and landscapes, shimmering reverberations trapped in water become clear glacial amber, and there to remain for untold years. Mirroring insects trapped in real amber, these are moments in time and slivers of the past, forever destined to play out their last moments in an endlessly abrupt memorial. These are both temporal and physical shards, meandering into the mysterious heart of inaccessibility; one gets the feeling that buried deep within the crystalline bosom of the polar continents is a similarly frozen secret, a deep secret that is known only to the ice and snow, and is whispered to the winds in the language of the slow rivers of ice. An icily haunting and ghostly ambience pervades each of these five pieces, almost akin to a physical presence that itself seems to hide secrets, ghosts endlessly wandering the wastes of the white desert searching for the frozen

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secret at the heart of a continent.

I have thoroughly enjoyed each of the five releases from Glacial Movements; label-owner Alessandro Tedeschi has a keen ear for the glacial and deeply icy in ambient music, and once again he has hit the spot with this CD from Harris. Yet again here is another imagining of the snowbound lands lying at the ends of the earth, and once again it succeeds in conjuring and evoking pristine images of mountainous bright eye-piercing white and over-arching azure blue, set amidst the foam-flecked lashings of the surrounding oceans. Deep ambience has always been my thing, and in my view it can't get any deeper than this: timeless frozen music for a timeless frozen place.

Samples:

- [The Sheet](#)
- [Like a Slow River](#)
- [Illusion of Unbroken Surface](#)