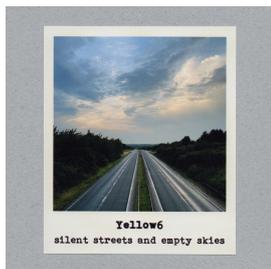


Brainwashed - Yellow6, "Silent Streets And Empty Skies"

Written by Eve McGivern

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Yellow6, the solo project of British guitarist Jon Attwood, first came to my attention through his collaboration with Thisquietarmy for the 2011 album "Death Valley," but Attwood himself has been active in since 2000. Recorded between April and June of 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown, the title of his latest is an indicator of the eerie lack of traffic, people in the streets, and vapor trails from air traffic from a neighboring airport. The fresh time to reflect and social distance—along with the purchase a new guitar—inspired Attwood to create nine pieces of beautifully layered electric guitar and effects that instill calm, to be enjoyed as ambient background music or appreciated for the guitar craft. The sparse, delicate sounds parlay a stillness of these strange times; a stillness that can be both disturbing and enriching, and wrapped in contemplation

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The nine parts are broken fairly evenly by a triptych of sorts in "Unbroken Sun (one)," "Unbroken Sun (two)," and "Unbroken Three (three)." Coming in as the three briefest ones, they each tend to meander, serving as a break and bookends to the album. With a bright, partly cloudy sky on the cover, I prefer to think of these as connectors, much in the same way the sun rises and sets each day, hence unbroken. Yet, while the sun may be unbroken, humanity is not, and the feeling is evident in the second track "Safe." With drums set low and back into the mix, the track offers cascading electric guitar, offering a steady and "safe" repetition of rhythm and comforting guitar work that results in a feeling of being surrounded in something warm and consolatory. The track had me visualizing kicking back in a recliner, feet up near a warm, crackling fire, immune to whatever the world was doing outside—a feeling I no doubt share with many others.

Other tracks are like-minded, with Attwood taking a layered and atmospheric approach, if not quite as settling as "Safe." With the exception of the aforementioned "Unbroken Sun" theme, all of the tracks go well on past seven minutes each, but every minute is infinitely listenable with a rich variety of guitar, piano and effects. "Panam," the longest at 18:40, is a haunting standout track that starts mildly enough but builds on an underlying rhythm of a consistent yet irregular heartbeat through which the guitar strings resound. If sound could be matched to a star, then the resonance of Jon's choice of notes would be akin to the shimmer and sparkle of stars

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through a cloudy night sky as guitar drone and plucked strings cut through a steady chorus of sad minor chords. The choice of title is apt, with "Panam" construed as "pan American" in this case, the sound feeling broad and full as it stretches over the length of the track—perhaps in the same way the pandemic has traversed borders and has a far-reaching impact.

This is music in which to get lost, but can easily be enjoyed as a focus. The majority of the music here is calm, but there are passages of heaviness. This heaviness is generally emphasized, then lifted by a follow-up passage of quietude, providing a sense of freedom and release. This is worthy listening for an escape from the heaviness of the new normal.

[Sound samples available here.](#)