

Brainwashed - Simon Scott, "Apart"

Written by Eve McGivern

Sunday, 13 December 2020 22:35 - Last Updated Monday, 14 December 2020 07:58



COVID-19 has torn people apart and brutally impacted lives. Having lost his father to the disease in April, *Apart* is Scott's musical release of his grief entwined with the natural tumult of a much-loved nature preserve spent traversing in youth with his father. These protected wetlands house species that are slowly disappearing, comprising a distinct sonic environment that changes with its inhabitants' demise. By capturing his current environment as part of his grieving process, Scott harnessed his awareness of temporality in all things as a musical expression to allow him to heal. Scott captures ten representations of this ephemeral world through field recordings centered around a piano, with electronic treatment to achieve an expressive and emotional musical ride.

[12k](#)

Comprised of ten tracks named "Apart A" through "Apart J," much of the album feels like an experiment, but one with a powerful purpose: to map out genuine grief against a bewildering new reality, the loss of a loved one balanced with a real need to come to terms with the everyday. As might be expected, this takes the listener through a series of peaks and valleys. The sound of skylarks, loons, flies, overhead aircraft, and passing vehicles permeates much of the music. Scott uses it to bring the listener in touch with a very active and vibrant daytime soundscape, both natural and human-made, before dipping into darker and contemplative moments. "Apart D" guides the listener into a more reflective mood with an evening theme, filled with the sound of crickets, flowing water, and owls, populated with minor chords and elongated drones.

"Apart E" opens into the daylight again, natural sounds subdued by atmospheric electronics, but "Apart G" with sounds of crying loons and a distant thunderstorm offer more complicated emotions, depending on one's interpretation. "Apart H" seems to distort church bells, dissolving into a screech and abruptly yanking the listener to a darker place with "Apart I." Incorporating harsher mechanical sounds alongside a drifting piano piece, "Apart I" feels the most despairing track of the album, perhaps due to what sounds like an electronic wailing banshee.

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I wanted very much to come out of this dark place and out of that valley with closing track "Apart J," but this isn't where I landed. This album has enough emotive delivery for another listener to come to a different conclusion. Art is undoubtedly subjective, and the key for Scott was to craft a personal guide through his emotional wasteland. An artist choosing to share that vehicle with others reveals bravery, knowing that no listener will come to the same destination as Scott's own journey.

[Sound samples available here.](#)