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RESORT + Additional Items

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Bernard Cohen, Department of Music, 2021

Artist's Statement

The recorded portion of my senior project consists of an album titled *Resort*, as well as additional pieces of music and visual art. The album is vaguely narrative driven, exploring parent-child relationships during climate catastrophe, and the decay of the mind's ability to process these apocalyptic events. Intentionally throughout this project, climate change and its effects are blatantly aestheticized and romanticized to create a sinister-optimistic dreamlike album. I began this project with a phrase that wouldn't leave my head: "With rising seas, the whole world's Resort." The concept of "Resort" is one that comes from a fixation on the aesthetics of climate change. The hedonism of late capitalism, and with it pervasive hyperreality, is situated to oppose the reality of its deterioration, creating a unique media language.

The album consists of ten main songs in a rough sequence. Throughout the production process, I heavily utilized simple, free MIDI plugins, to convey simplicity and timelessness without relying on conventional methods of aural deterioration/distortion such as simulated tape warble or bitcrushing. I also employed ethical sampling techniques, mainly consisting of the resampling of self-created audio.

I relied upon many free or pirated mastering programs/plugins; I wanted to seek the distortion that comes from misuse of tools meant to make music sound more professional. All of the visual components of this project were created with a similar ethos. I used tools such as letsenhance.io, a website which used neural networks to enhance low-resolution images. I found that through multiple uses of this tool on images which I curated and reduced in quality, a dreamlike, painterly effect came through.

The album is currently hosted on Bandcamp, free to listen to on their platform. The link is below:

- https://youlookamazing.bandcamp.com/album/resort

Aside from the album, there are three sets of songs included:

- An ambient overture meant to be played before the album, created using Akira Rabeleis' free generative art software, Argeïphontes Lyre,
    - https://youlookamazing.bandcamp.com/album/resort-unpreoccupied
- two songs that remix the vocals on "Changing the Island", the first song on *RESORT*,
    - https://youlookamazing.bandcamp.com/album/makes-u-flee
- and a pair of singles which employ many of the same production techniques as the album, but which don't fit in thematically with the other works. These songs were created towards the end of my process.
    - https://youlookamazing.bandcamp.com/album/hellhole-body-ustaywild

All works were created between December of 2019 and May of 2020. All production and mixing was done by Bernard Cohen. All lyrics and vocals, aside from a feature by my friend Rowan Horton on "Clear Buckets", were written and recorded by Bernard Cohen. All pieces of visual art were created by Bernard Cohen.