
Lost & Sound

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FIRST MOVEMENT

the masterpiece was elusive.

a sound rang clearly throughout my mind, but the instruments on my planet all sounded wrong. hollow. lusterless.

so i did the only thing any reasonable musician would do... i left for the stars.

strapped into my personal transport, i departed with enough supplies for two annums and extra room for three new instruments to join me.

don't let anyone tell you it's easy to search the galaxy for new sounds.

you would think there's a sonic smorgasbord just waiting to be discovered, but galactic cultures are surprisingly similar.

almost every planet has some rural subset that plays bouncy, staccato songs with varber-like tones. repetitive and relentlessly upbeat.

ah, i see i've made a mistake! you don't know what a varber is, now do you?

although the names of your music machines often escape me, i believe this varber to sound much like your accordion.

anyway, on i traveled. my journey was quite pleasant, making it easy to meander from one planet to the next. before i knew it, three cycles had passed in the click of a stick and i'd yet to hear anything truly new.

xexcellon had elegant hiterms that sounded much like your synthesizers, but they lacked the crucial ability to oscillate to the fringes of the audible spectrum.

on the des nos asteroid belt, a scullat was the closest i came to capturing the hypnotic majesty of repetitive echo.

sadly, the instrument proved too complex for improvisation and acted temperamental with repeated use, so i left it behind.

thankfully, things took an unexpected turn at the boundary of charted space.

on the fifth unpopulated moon in the orbit of eundun, i located an abandoned stage with a plethora of instruments scattered about and not a single musician to be found.

who would come here in the first place only to abscond and leave such a strange sight behind?

it was here that i secured the first piece of my sonic puzzle.

towards the left edge of the stage i discovered a shaken instrument from a planet i could not place that produced a rich and rhythmic sound.

i lost two days testing this shaker from every angle, probing the limits of its capabilities. the more i pushed, the more it produced.

with no accompanying name and no record of it in my database, i dubbed this instrument a debutave. it would bolster the booming beat of my masterpiece.

i departed the lonely moon with a new sonic signature aboard my craft and a burgeoning song in my heart.

unfortunately, this was but a momentary note of triumph as what happened next would drastically alter my journey and my masterpiece irreparably.

SECOND MOVEMENT

i'd located one instrument on my journey to capture the universe's most compelling sounds.

but a lone instrument could not complete this masterpiece and thus my grand opus was far off on the horizon.

my small ship blazed further into the reaches of the cosmos. deep space to bright day to cold night to another set of coordinates and so on.

this continued for what felt like an endless era of my journey, beautiful planet after beautiful planet filled with complacent sounds.

however, it all came crashing down around me on duluun iii. my ship quit in the outer atmosphere and the ensuing landing was a complete disaster.

with my transport now a crinkled lump of shielding and circuits, i salvaged what i could from the wreckage...

...including a mercifully undamaged debutave, the first and only new instrument i'd uncovered in my hunt.

in need of food, drink, and auditory stimulation, i resolved to leave the wreckage of my previous life behind and cross over into a new existence.

i scraped along a rough path of flat stones, lightly thumping a basic beat on the debutave in a futile effort to keep my spirit alight and stave off hopelessness.

eventually, a small settlement sat ahead of me, my stagnating limbs stiffly dragging me towards the unknown civilization with great trepidation and exhaustion.

i collapsed mere paces from the simple fence surrounding the town, my meager belongings landing at my side.

in your standard story of cosmic exploration, this is where the protagonist would awaken in the care of a lovely townspeople, forging a soulful connection in a foreign land.

this is not that story. i awakened some time later in the exact spot where i lay upon my collapse.

graciously, some mysterious samaritan had placed a container of clean water and a few bits of sustenance before me. i was grateful.

pressing on after my unintended rest, i entered the village. the sparse inhabitants of duluun iii viewed me as a curiosity. i wasn't exotic enough to be a subject of great attention, nor was i familiar enough to warrant acceptance.

an icy night followed as i did my best to find shelter at the foot of a large and seemingly desolate formation.

it was in this state of survival that i nearly forgot why i'd set out on my journey in the first place.

before amnesia could settle in, a sweet melody floated towards me. ethereal and comforting, it was the exact joy i needed in that moment.

drawn towards its source, i pursued the soothing notes inside the large formation.

once indoors, i was greeted with indistinct hallways and ricochetting notes, a sonic maze that would deter any standard traveller. but i was not any standard traveller.

i was musician on a mission. and so i began my hunt anew.

THIRD MOVEMENT

i've always believed that time passes differently for everyone.

what seems like an eternity to me may simply be a momentary blip for another.

as i searched the foreboding hallways of this large formation on a foreign planet where i retained only the barest connection to my past, time had all but stopped for me, the remaining grains frozen in the middle of my hourglass.

this sensation was fortified by the unending trawl of lovely notes which drew me onward, begging me to locate their unknown source.

would i discover a new tool, one which would push me ever closer to my dream of crafting a truly unique masterpiece of song?

and what of the creature creating those alluring notes, did they feel locked in their own eternity of performance to match my unending search?

it turns out that i would never be able to answer that question. just as the sweet sound seemed to be immediately around the corner, it halted.

i bent around that curve amid draining silence, disheartened after my painful procession.

there it sat, a baffling instrument that looked nothing like the siren song it produced.

the ugly contraption was a true mystery, and even more mysterious yet was the one who had performed on it so masterfully.

i set aside my gnawing need to identify the musician. their tones called me to this place, but their instrument was my true desire.

there's no possible way to compare this awkward mechanism to any single one of your earthly devices. it seemed to be a horrifying haberdash of a harp, a trumpet, and a triangle.

fearfully, i plucked the musical monstrosity, pulling my digit across a long band that vibrated against a metallic pyriform that expressed itself through a furling funnel.

this was unquestionably the instrument which had drawn me forward through the maze. i'd found the second piece of harmonious hardware for my masterpiece.

how i would remove the instrument and find my way out of this labyrinth was another question entirely.

entranced and exhausted, i sat down and began to experiment with the intriguing instrument.

i wished that my insufficient plunking might draw back the performer who had momentarily disappeared, and together we would depart from this formidable formation.

instead, another sound began to play. dull and repetitive, the performance was so droning and distracting that i was forced to abandon my own aural exploration.

i sought to scoop up the magnificent instrument which drew me into the heart of these horrid hallways and expeditiously exit.

yet the odd shape of the apparatus made this almost impossible. i fumbled among my paltry bags, items scattering as the droning sustained.

impatiently, i struggled to grasp the contraption. i couldn't make it fit! would i be cursed to leave my newfound music maker behind?

FINAL MOVEMENT

haunting me, the droning tones consumed my every thought.

somehow i had precariously found room for the awkward instrument among my fraying bags.

but now i walked without destination, only desire fueled my departure. the desire to be free of the nauseating noise consuming the halls of this awful architecture.

i'd marched unceasingly to acquire the odd instrument which was now in my care. but among the maddening specter of this sinister sound, i regretted my decision.

if ever there was a time to nourish my mind with thoughts of composition, it was upon me. but i was singularly occupied with escape.

entering a new hallway that looked like every other hallway, the heavy undertow of despair tugged at me. i craved freedom from this pain, this sonic prison.

it soon turned to a prison of my person as well when the hallway ended with no exit in sight.

spinning to retrace my unfortunate steps, i was shocked to find no way to return. the path had vanished and i was inexplicably trapped.

how could this occur now?

had i acquired two pieces of my deepest desire only to expire before the third and final one could be attained?

alas, i survived to spin this unbelievable tale, so you know the eventual answer. but enduring this ordeal would test my every talent.

i know it cheap to take you down this winding road only to say it may have all been a dream, but i promise you i have no logical explanation for what happened next.

after my surprise imprisonment, my memories from inside the formation sharply end. the next thing i knew, i was back on my shredded ship.

was my trial inside the musical maze even real? had any time passed since my crash landing on duluun iii? i was positively flummoxed.

it seemed as though i'd been through something real enough, however, as my beloved debutave and the majestic new instrument of ugly design lay right beside me.

yet i was still shipwrecked with no means of departure. amidst my frustration, i resorted to my only coping mechanism... music.

with no better moniker in mind, i dubbed the confounding instrument a lemoter. plucking it gently, i sought the tones i first heard it produce.

my trusty debutave could be operated with one hand, and that's just what i did, rhythmically shaking it in time to the lemoter's melody.

this alien sound somehow triggered my ship to emit an ascending tone with strobing tremolo and balanced reverb. an emergency beacon.

the signal connected with the nearest passing craft. i played on, lost in music as the crew recorded their cautious approach on foot, broadcasting the feed back to their own ship.

and for this i was immensely grateful, as that recording preserved an improvised performance i would grow to cherish with every fiber of my being. a song that saved me. my masterpiece.



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