

Oceanfables: Ethological

Album Commentary

Hello! I am **Witch's Cadence**, the artist behind the Oceanfalls album "Ethological".

This album was very fun to make, and I tried my best to go all out on everything, I feel like after working on it that I have already grown so much as a composer and producer (even though I still am figuring mixing out, haha).

While I was making this album, I had the thought cross my mind that I would kind of like to do a commentary on each of the tracks, because I always loved reading a composers thought process behind everything, so maybe someone else could get the same joy I get from reading the weirdly in depth self-analyses that all of the Homestuck musicians put on some of their tracks. I don't know, maybe it'll be fun for me too! (We'll see what I think after writing all of this in like 5 hours...)

To begin, this whole album started after I realized that I was making a little bit too much music for Oceanfalls, and probably should stop before the next volume becomes... too much of me, haha. So instead, I decided to ask if I could quarantine myself in a solo album where the *whole point* is to oversaturate yourself with my music! My plan is flawless, nothing will go wrong...

TRACK #1: FOR THE GREATER GOOD

When I first asked Nights if I could do a solo album, she told me that it sounded like a good idea, but that I should probably think of a theme for the whole album. (:0 I didn't think about that...) So, then I had to come up with a theme! (Obviously...)

This song started sometime after that, I had been pacing around a lot trying to think of a theme for what my album would be, until at some point something struck me and I had the urge to make a song for Zachery Lumen, considering he seemed like a very intriguing character, but he has little to no music for him! (None at all at the time of making this track I'm pretty sure) When I started off, I had "Here We Are" from Undertale and Ray Mikey's "Hallowed Halls" from Volume Five stuck in my head, so I wanted to make a very groovy and kind of mysteriously villainous theme (This is why it has those 8-bit noise percussion, haha).

I think I also had another song on my mind, but I can't remember for the life of me what it was... Oh well. Over time while working on this, I realized that it might be more interesting to make it more of a song for the general theme of "actions done backed by questionable morals", and then BAM, it hit me, my album's theme should just be that! I decided to use the main motif from this as a main theme throughout as many of the tracks as I could (though I kind of ended up forgetting about it a lot, and it only ended up in four other tracks. Whoopsies...)

TRACK #2: UNFAVORABLE OUTCOME (FOR YOU)

This song actually was created before I had the idea to do a solo album, but once I had the theme for it, I decided to take it out of the roster for the next volume and put it here. I made it with the idea of it being a battle theme for Nino, which is why I decided that it fit the theme of this album better.

When I first made this track, I was kind of on a chiptune high, I really wanted to get better at making songs with magical 8-bit and NES VST, so this is like the 3rd or second chiptune song I made in a row, which is pretty funny looking back on it. I wanted to work on making stuff with more chromatic stuff, so the main riff thing that starts off the song is kind of weird. I like it though! At 0:12 I brought in this Nino motif I made that comes from a demo song (we'll get to that one later).

The demo song was made to be a generic Nino theme since he surprisingly doesn't have very many songs associated with him, or at least just him specifically. Also, at 2:07 you can hear the Oceanfalls lick. (Here's a secret, that lick is hidden all across the music for Oceanfalls! Try and find all of them, will you?) I also put in the earthbound level up in at the end, just because, I mean, why not?

TRACK #3: HIS TORMENT

After I finally got the idea for the theme of the album, I came up with as many song concepts as I could and wrote them down. This one was written down as "ruit bully suvi song". If you couldn't realize from the concept name, and the actual title of the song, this one is for when Prince Ruit used to tease and mess with Prince Suvillan.

This was actually one of the last few songs I made for the album, because I wasn't getting any good ideas for how I wanted to do it. Initially I was considering doing something like "School" from Deltarune, but I just didn't I guess, haha. Eventually, I finally sat down (because it was the only song left lol) and started off with the old reliable "silly Vegetales like low womp womps", what does that mean? Well, if you've ever heard the Vegetales intro, and then you listen to the beginning of "His Torment", I think you'll understand what I mean.

After I did that, it hit me, I could make this the stupidest thing ever and it would be amazing, so I made some of the notes off a bit, added wrong notes, trumpet, and the real kicker, *Ukulele and claps*. It's the best thing ever, I swear to god. However, I'm sure you've noticed how halfway through, the song gets more serious. In the intro half I imagined it like this: different scenes where Ruit is bullying Suvillan, he like pokes and prods him, maybe he scares him once, and all while this is happening Lune is the one clapping lol (deadpan, of course). At 0:39 it shifts to where all of these memories are floating around Suvillan's head, until it reaches the climax, where it swells up to lead into...

TRACK #4: ROYAL BLOOD

This song was created before the album's concept, but I think it fits in quite well. I wanted it to be a menacing and cool theme for Suvi, so I used a little bit of Wight's song "Sovereign Domain". This is actually the second song I made referencing that one, but the other one is currently on the backburner, though I'm sure it will show up some day.

I really like how "His Torment" leads into this one, even though that was not the plan from the start of making either of these tracks, haha. It just kinda worked out that way halfway through making "His Torment". I don't have much to say on this track other than I'm happy with how it turned out. I do like to imagine that while "His Torment" is about the younger, more withdrawn version of Suvi, this one is about the confident, powerful, and menacing as all hell mature Suvi.

TRACK #5: RAZE IN VITRIOL

When I was writing ideas for songs, one that almost instantly popped into my head was a Contritum cover. That song is just too good that I just *HAD* to do my take on it. I wanted it to be as packed to the brim with energy as the original Contritum (or more, if I could manage it), so of course, it had to start with choirs. I mean, what sets the tone for an epic battle more than choirs??

I decided to go right into the main Contritum riff, (with just a little bit of industrial percussion) and go all out with some crazy synths and good old shreddage. If anything, I tried my hardest to make it as bombastic but menacing as possible. Then it slows down a bit, to build up for the first big motif, "Swaying Chains" by Wight, and then I just made it go ham again, haha. I think the industrial "ting" adds to the feeling of confidence that I think Corona has.

During the middle section I had a little break for the Nino motif from that demo song (still gonna get to that) and Aria's motif from Volume 1. Then I decided to bring in the next major motif, this time from "Kiss of Death" by keyboard cait. It was kind of funny, because I asked her what the idea behind that song was, and she said "the concept's pretty vague, i composed it just to be 'a song that fits corona killing people with total ease'", to which I responded "that's perfect Imfao". I actually brought back the exact same choir chords to this part because it just sounded so good here. After that it's pretty much just crazy solo on the nes pulse wave and then it ends with one sound falling in parallel to how

Nino falls in the first fight with corona, and one sound staying on top. I just thought that was a cool idea, I guess. Now the funny thing is, I then realized after making this song that it was kind of similar in structure to "Sunderer's Reprisal" by Wights end in that it goes "Corona goin' crazy section" "break section with aria and Nino motifs" "Corona goin' crazy section but more", and even worse, I had named the song "Round 2". Like, whoopsies. Big oops, wtf have I done lol. So, I just decided to change the name. I asked wight for name ideas and he suggested "Riven and Razed" and then I thought of the word vitriol (which is such an awesome word, we should use that word more) so now it's called "Raze in Vitriol" which is honestly a better name than "Round 2" I think.

TRACK #6: JUST ME AND MY BOYFRIEND

This song is the one that went through the most change from concept to final version. Initially on the sheet I wrote "mei thief song", and it was meant to be for when she was stealing, but I kind of felt like that didn't fit in as well with the other, actually more menacing concepts that the album was about. Also it was going to be another very upbeat song, and since this was the last track I made for this album, I thought it would be a better idea to make a song that could serve as a break point in the middle of the album, I mean I already made like ten other super hype songs for it, that's already a bit much I think.

So instead, I decided to make a relaxed song about how the world kind of mistreated Mei and Boyfriend, mainly inspired by the panel of a younger version of her and Boyfriend sitting under a bridge while it rains (at least I think it was raining I might be misremembering).

I'm quite happy with this song, also I didn't realize until after I made it, but it sounded kind of not major or minor, and it turns out it's in Dorian, So, uh, cool!! With the first idea I had I wanted to put the "Popple Battle" from superstar saga in it, but I never made that version, so it didn't happen. Instead, I ended up accidentally referencing that one toby fox picross song. I really liked how it sounded so I didn't take it out when I noticed, haha.

TRACK #7: BLOOD PACT

This song was made for the Umbra Clan, kind of just in general. I imagine them as kind of like samurai, since they are sort of deadly warriors with very strong allegiance to the human monarchy thing. So, I decided to use some very Japanese instruments in the intro.

I had to look up someone playing the instruments to do my best to get the intro right, I wanted it to sound as authentic as I could, though I'm sure anyone who has studied that music could tell that it's very fake instantly (not to mention that it's soundfonts...

After the intro it just kind of goes... I don't know, *somewhere*. I was kind of still a bit sick when I was finishing this song, so I don't really remember much of my thought process on it. I do, however, remember that it ends by zoning in on Lune's theme. Perhaps it is a flash back of the history of the Umbra clan, and then it goes through the timeline until it ends up on Lune, who knows! I don't remember.

TRACK #8: "EIDOLON", PIRATE OF THE SEVEN CPUS

Eidolon Piracy song. Need I say more?

Okay but for real, this song was so fun to make. When I first started it, I really had no idea where I wanted it to go, but then when I added the NES pulse wave arpeggios and the low piano, it all clicked. At first the scratches were just really fast pitch bends on the voice sample, but then I found this awesome free scratch plugin that I could control with automation, so it turned out even *more* awesome.

I like to imagine that this whole song would play out while she's pirating like Super Mario World, but she imagines herself as this epic hacker "hacking into the mainframe", whatever that means... Also, I put her theme in the beginning from Volume 4. I don't know if you noticed or not...

TRACK #9: BASTARD CONTRACT

This song has a kind of funny story, but it really only works in two parts. Sadly, this is part two and the episode just ended, so you are going to have to watch the ending credits, and then see episode one later. Basically, this is a Cape Nino song. I wanted to make something very upbeat and... *cool*, for him.

Also, Wight sent me this weird Christmas ambience plugin that apparently Toby Fox used on a couple of his songs, which was a gold mine discovery, and I ended up using it for ambience and a little melody bit in the ending. The plugin is hilarious in that he just sent me it as a random .dll file and then when you open it it's all of these crazy functions that do nothing lol (at least as far as we know right now).

TRACK #10: BRILLIANCE SHARP AS STEEL

After I made "For the Greater Good" I realized that I still wanted to do a Zachery Lumen song for the album, so I decided to buckle down and make this. When I started it, I added the very menacing strings at the beginning because I wanted to show how he really gives off that scary doctor vibe, but then it goes right into groove town with the first actual section, because uh, he does seem like a kind of freaky badass, I think.

I really don't know why I chose a genesis soundfont for the drums, but I did. Also, they have a lot of triplets if I remember correctly, so they are kind of weird just in general. The chord progression is also kind of weird. Honestly the whole thing is just weird. Kind of like Zachery. I think my favorite part is 1:08, where the piano really feels like a part in a Danganronpa song. I don't know, Danganronpa just has really good music. Also, this is one of the songs I actually put the "For the Greater Good" motif in, so, there's that.

TRACK #11: DONE WITH YOUR NONSENSE

Remember how on the "Bastard Contract" commentary, I mentioned how you would have to wait for episode one to get the full story? Well, this is episode one, and here's the story. This song was made with the idea of being the Cape Nino song on the album, and so I made the whole song, and it was so badass and awesome.

I then sent it to one of my good friends in the music team (Banigion) because I was curious what he thought about it. Our conversation went like this:

Me: *sends song*

Banigion: woah

Banigion: this is badass

Me: see what I mean about the triplets lol

Banigion: yeah, you somehow made kajji's theme even cooler

Me: WHAT

As it turns out I had accidentally used Kajji's theme instead of Cape Nino's. How does this happen, you asked? Well, if you listen to "Know Thyself" and then listen to "Kajji's Theme", then you will notice that they are actually kind of similar! Also, I had just... been listening to Kajji's theme a lot... Whoops... This track was also one where Wight pointed out that I was panning stuff too hard, to which I had to tell him that I was actually using a stereo expander on my master. And I quote from Wight "On Your master?? WHY???"

So uhhhh. . . Whoops again lol.

Either way I now know not to do that, and he sent me a great free multiband compressor, so I completely redid the master on every song. (So, make sure to thank Wight for why it sounds so much better than it would have)

TRACK #12: JUDGEMENT BY GENOCIDE

Witch's Cadence: Here it is, the great finale of the album. The 7:30 beast of a song (at least for me, haha). The idea behind this song is that it's about The Merciless, one of the celestials whose last act was to kill every living being on the face of the world.

At the start I used Ray Mikey's song "Oceanfalls" since it's kind of for the past and history of Oceanfalls I think, or it could be like a main theme, either way I used it. I imagine this beginning section shows the Merciless with his love, the human princess. Then at 0:31 it takes a turn for the worse, his love has died, and he must revel in this knowledge.

I then made a motif of my own, this one represents the merciless himself, and it is surrounded by two different motifs, one is a short segment of "Emotional Moment" by Ray Mikey being played over and over again, to sort of represent his emotions growing stronger and stronger, and one is

a surprise motif that we'll learn about in later Volumes... Then the laugh, boy do I love insane laughs, also the rising diminished chord, it's just a good buildup, I think. I hope. I think.

At 2:01 I brought in a reference to "Long Ago" by Frosty Mac from Volume 2, for the cool history buffs out there, I guess. Then to represent the winged (as he descends from the moon to go on his rampage) I used the suspended notes from 0:37 in "Winged World" from Ray Mikey's solo album on the lead guitar, and sort of tried to represent the little piano arpeggio like figure in the other guitar sound. This part is all of the winged fighting against him trying to well, not die. And then I brought back the Oceanfalls theme, a confidence boost perhaps? Until, once again, we get The Merciless's theme come back in full swing, with sirens to boot. Quite an imposing figure methinks...

The little Atari voice that says "purification in progress" is in reference to the rpg maker game OFF made by mortis ghost, where in the battles some of the backgrounds say those very words. Then right back to the Oceanfalls theme.

Now he's on the monster's land, and he's shredding through all of them as they do their best to fight back. But then the music picks up! It's a bit more confident and pompous, I think. I can't know for certain, but I imagine the monster monarch to be very confident in themselves. I used a bit of monster town at 4:35 because of Wight's suggestion for that as a monster motif, and I think it works quite well! Until the monster monarch is slain by the merciless, well, mercilessly. Then right back to The Merciless wailing on everyone.

At 5:32 I used some of "Peaceful Pirates" for a human motif (also at Wight's Suggestion) (Thank you Wight, very cool!) So, we get some of the humans fighting back, and I imagine they have someone try and rally them to fight, though it couldn't be the princess (she's kind of dead as was already established). But then the music fades, I imagine at this part The Merciless is hiding and flying around in the shadows as the army of humans looks around, until it breaks out into bombastic insanity. Eventually it ends that section with a horrifying, "PURIFICATION, COMPLETE" and it ends with a final repeat of the Oceanfalls theme, as The Merciless considers what he has done. What does he think of it? I'dk only Nights knows, and we probably never will haha, but I still think that it's a cool song, and I'm glad I made it.

Nights: I actually never thought the day where someone makes music for a very, very background character would come, but here we are! What a brilliant, well thought-out piece this is.

I'd just like to say that I'll definitely show the story of the Merciless to everyone some day in a work different from Oceanfalls, and perhaps find a way to integrate this wonderful music within it when I do so. Thank you for creating such a nice album, Witch!

LUNE FUMO REAL (BONUS)

It's just a song I made because Nights drew a Lune Fumo, not much to say to be honest.

AMBIGUOUS AMNESIAC (BONUS)

This song is the oldest song on the album. I made it a couple months ago to be a Nino theme since he didn't have that many songs really, but it was only a demo concept. I have been trying to make it into a fully fleshed out song, but we'll just have to see when that happens

OCEANFALLS RAP (BONUS)

After I finished all of the main songs for the album, I suddenly remembered this demo I had made that was just a little bit of a Nino rap, but it wasn't finished, so uh, I finished it. It was kind of painful to make because my mic is a bit broken, and it kept disconnecting, which is probably why I stopped working on it the first time. Glad I finished it though; epic Five solo is my favorite genre of music.

That's the whole commentary!

Thanks for reading I guess.

Here, have a donut for your struggles.



- Cadence