



# Climate in the Club:

## Imagining future oceans through eco grime

Morgan Sleeper & Jessica Love-Nichols | 6.20.19

# Music and Climate Change

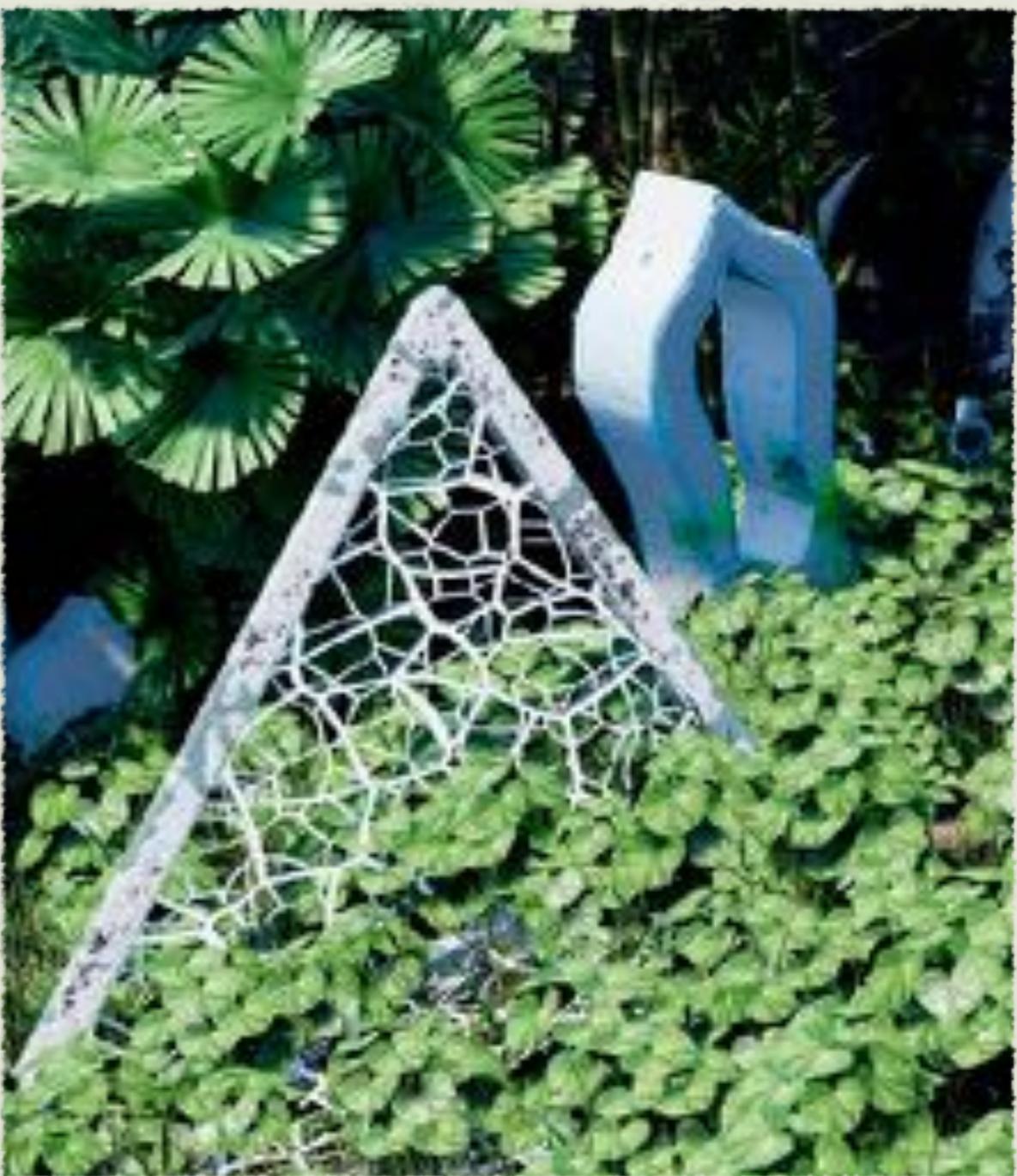
- ◆ Music important way people make sense of environmental concerns (Wodak 2018)
  - ◆ Folk (Ingram 2008)
  - ◆ Classical (Adams 2003)
  - ◆ Art/experimental (Ballora 2014, Philpott 2016, Polli 2005)

# Music and Climate Change

- ◆ Music important way people make sense of environmental concerns (Wodak 2018)
  - ◆ Folk (Ingram 2008)
  - ◆ Classical (Adams 2003)
  - ◆ Art/experimental (Ballora 2014, Philpott 2016, Polli 2005)
  - ◆ Popular music of today?

# Eco grime

- ◆ Emerging genre of club-oriented electronic music
- ◆ Eco Futurism Corporation (2015)
- ◆ Netlabel from Sydney, Australia



# Eco grime

- ◆ Grime
  - ◆ 2000s electronic dance music from U.K.
  - ◆ Dizzee Rascal
  - ◆ Roll Deep
  - ◆ The Streets



# Eco grime

- ◆ Eco grime distinguished by: (Brown 2018)
  - ◆ Environmental sound samples
    - ◆ Water, ambient sounds, animal calls
  - ◆ Overt ecological themes
  - ◆ Concern for ongoing environmental destruction & climate change

# Eco grime

- ◆ Thematic elements of genre communicated through both musical and linguistic elements
- ◆ Musicological approach to analysis (Marett & Barwick 2007; Tuttle 2012; Sleeper 2018)
- ◆ Language and music as a integral whole

# Today

- ◆ Analysis of two popular eco grime artists
  - ◆ tropical interface
  - ◆ Forces
- ◆ Both artists use music and language to communicate climate concerns and imagine different ecological futures through eco grime

# tropical interface

- ◆ Russian producer
- ◆ Imagines post-human utopia of natural harmony



# tropical interface: eco world

- ◆ 2016 track on Eco Futurism Corp.'s 'Ecomodern' compilation
- ◆ 9 minute sound collage
- ◆ A “mission statement” for EFC and eco grime as a genre (Brown 2018)



# tropical interface: eco world

1. Human present
2. Reclamation
3. Post-human utopia



# tropical interface: eco world

## 1. Human present (0:00-0:25)

- ◆ piano
- ◆ heavy machinery
- ◆ indistinct speech



# tropical interface: eco world

## 2. Reclamation (1:15-1:45)

- ◆ looping trickling water
- ◆ “Welcome to the new world.  
The world of ecological future.  
High technological artificial  
intelligence had to exterminate  
humanity to save nature.  
Because nature has higher  
priority than humanity.”



# tropical interface: eco world

## 3. Post-human ecological utopia (5:45-6:05)

- ◆ Nature sounds (water, birds, insects, wind)
- ◆ Balafon melodies
- ◆ Djembe percussion
- ◆ Animal horn
- ◆ No speech



# tropical interface: eco world

- ◆ Shifting instrumentation
  - ◆ Machinery → natural sounds
  - ◆ water, birds
- ◆ Industrial → pre-industrial African instruments
  - ◆ balafon, djembe, horn
- ◆ Shifting language
  - ◆ Synthesised speech →
  - ◆ Distorted speech →
  - ◆ Absence of speech

# tropical interface: Eco Club Afterlife



- ◆ 2016 album on Eco Futurism Corp.
- ◆ “Sounds about utopian ideas of ecological future”
- ◆ Continues natural instrumentation and themes of ‘eco world’

# tropical interface: Eco Club Afterlife



- ◆ No human language
- ◆ Programmatic track titles depict post-human 'afterlife'
  - ◆ 'Eco Bot'
  - ◆ 'Plant Recovery'
  - ◆ 'Seed Replicator'
  - ◆ 'Jungle Software Test'

# tropical interface: Eco Club Afterlife



- ◆ Natural instrumentation
- ◆ ‘Plant Recovery’
  - ◆ mechanised soil-turning
- ◆ ‘Seed Replicator’
  - ◆ watering
- ◆ ‘Jungle Software Test’
  - ◆ ambient jungle, bird calls

# tropical interface

- ◆ Imagines a utopian, post-human ecological future via the eradication of humanity by technology
- ◆ Music
  - ◆ Machinery -> Nature
- ◆ Language
  - ◆ (Synthesised) spoken word, track titles

# Forces

- ◆ Finnish producer
- ◆ Imagines an ecological future of self-healing oceans



# Forces: Plastisphere

- ◆ 2018 tape release
- ◆ Theorises microorganisms that feed on plastic polluting the world's oceans



# Forces: Plastisphere

- ◆ Language
- ◆ Programmatic track titles
  - ◆ 'Symbionts'
  - ◆ 'Alga'
  - ◆ 'Great Pacific'
- ◆ Samples of vocal music



# Forces: Plastisphere

- ◆ Music
  - ◆ Written using SuperCollider
  - ◆ ‘Fed’ samples of EDM and trance music
  - ◆ Procedurally generates glitchy, disquieting tracks
  - ◆ Musically mimics recycling of ‘plastic’ by theorised microorganisms



# Forces: Plasticsphere

- ◆ “As Long As Skies Are Blue”
- ◆ Repurposes “Summer” by Calvin Harris (2014)



# Forces: Plasticsphere



# Forces: Plasticsphere

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- ◆ Repurposes “Summer” by Calvin Harris (2014)



# Forces: Plasticsphere

- ◆ Breaking down / recycling intensifies as album progresses
- ◆ Samples become more granular, less recognisable



# Forces: Plasticsphere

1. Pattern Definitions
2. Symbionts
3. As Long As Skies Are Blue
4. Ghost Nets
5. Great Pacific
6. Imminent
7. Alga
8. Pit Formers
9. Shards and Pellets



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# Forces

- ◆ Imagines future of self-healing oceans
- ◆ Nature saving itself via emergency evolution
- ◆ Humans marginal (provide raw material), but not explicitly eradicated
- ◆ Music (SuperCollider) and language (vocal samples, track titles)

# Climate in the Club

- ◆ Eco grime reimagines ‘the club’ as a space of sonic environmental activism
- ◆ Uses unique musicological resources of electronic music to communicate concern for world’s oceans and changing climate
  - ◆ Sound collages, sampling, varied instrumentation, synthesised speech, SuperCollider
- ◆ Uses the musical vocabulary of modern EDM to bring these concerns to the dancefloor

# Climate in the Club

- ◆ tropical interface:
- ◆ “[The] club is like a gallery... [a] place to introduce new things and fresh concepts” (Eco Club Afterlife)

# Conclusions

- ◆ Eco grime:
  - ◆ Reimagines 'the club' as a space of sonic environmental activism
  - ◆ Imagines different environmental futures:
    - ◆ post-human utopia and self-healing oceans
    - ◆ Challenges perception that climate communication only happens through 'folk' (conscious/roots) or 'high' (classical/art) music, and not popular music
    - ◆ Shows importance of both music and language in communicating environmental concerns

# Thank you!



References: [tinyurl.com/EcoGrimeRefs](http://tinyurl.com/EcoGrimeRefs)

Eco grime playlist: [tinyurl.com/EcoGrimePlaylist](http://tinyurl.com/EcoGrimePlaylist)

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