

ELEMENTALS

6 Tracks — 60 minutes total



Engaging yet relaxing, **Elementals** features recordings that celebrate earth's primal voices ... the rumble of thunder, the pitter-patter of rain, the murmur of wind, the rush of waves, and the gurgles and tinkles of brooks and streams. Don your headphones and be transported into elemental nature, where you will touch upon that which is basic and fundamental to one's experience of the music of the natural world.

1. Rolling Thunder

It is spring in the Appalachian Mountains of Virginia. We set up camp next to a small pond. At dusk, spring peepers sound off from the water's edge and a thunderstorm blows our way. Soon it is raining. We brave the elements to watch the lightning bolts, many of which have horizontal arms that reach across the sky.

The thunder seems to travel miles from its origins, gradually disappearing into the distance with striking variations of intensity along its paths. It as if giant boulders are rolling thunderously toward the horizon, their rumbles echoing off the surrounding hills.

May 4, 1993 at 7pm. George Washington National Forest west of Staunton, Virginia. Recorded by Lang Elliott.

2. Island Wavescape

In late June, we visit Seal Island, a remote seabird refuge off the coast of Maine. At dawn, we hike away from the breeding colonies to the far end of the island. A gentle breeze blows against our faces as the sun rises above the horizon.

Resting on a grassy mound at the top of a ledge, with salt spray wafting our way, we close our eyes and focus on the pounding surf, on the endless waves crashing against the rocky shoreline and washing over the rounded boulders. There is violence in the soundscape, yet we find it rhythmic and calming, and are humbled by the sheer elemental power on display.

June 25, 1994 at 6am. Seal Island National Wildlife Refuge in outer Penebscot Bay in Maine. Recorded by Lang Elliott.

3. Tinkling Trickle

While exploring the mountains of West Virginia, we come upon a small brook in a forested hollow. Narrow streams of water wind their way around sharp-edged stones and then flow over a tiny moss-covered ledge, falling into a swirling pool before continuing downstream. The water's voice is delicate and ringing, vibrant and chiming.

We sit in cool shade beneath towering trees. A robin carols from high in the canopy. Listening closely, we detect the repeated songs of a Nashville warbler, black-throated green warbler, and junco. And at times, barely audible in the distance, we thrill at the flutey notes of a hermit thrush. How nice to behold this tinkling trickle, enlivened and excited by avian song.

May 15, 2000 at 10am. Monongahela National Forest near Marlinton, West Virginia. Recorded by Lang Elliott.

4. Mountain Freshet

It is mid-June, high in the Medicine Bow Mountains of Wyoming. Such a beautiful scene ... an alpine meadow and lake set against towering rocky peaks with deep blue sky above. There are still patches of snow on the ground. A meltwater stream meanders through the meadow, which is lush with green grass and wildflowers.

The soundscape is like a breath of fresh air. The churning gurgle of the brook combines with the gentle rush of more distant freshets to produce a soothing, atmospheric effect. White-crowned sparrows sing throughout, each song beginning with a wavering whistled tone. Juncos add soft trills to the chorus. And a distant robin comes and goes, its familiar melody reminding us of home.

June 12, 2017 at 6am. Mirror Lake basin in the Medicine Bow Mountains near Laramie, Wyoming. Recorded by Lang Elliott.

5. Winter Rain

It is the middle of the winter in an oak forest. An unseasonably warm and rainy spell arrives that quickly melts away the snow to reveal a flattened carpet of brown leaves. Raindrops splatter against the leaves and water droplets form that mirror the pale gray sky.

We revel in hearing only the sound of the rain. No birds, frogs or insects. Just pure natural rain, rinsing and cleansing the forest floor, relaxing and refreshing our minds.

January 27, 2018 at 3pm. Connecticut Hill Wildlife Management Area near Ithaca, New York. Recorded by Lang Elliott.

6. Wind in the Pines

At dusk, wind blows through the southern pine woods. Crickets trill and chirp. The wind rises and falls, changing directions as if uncertain of its destination. A lone chuck-will's-widow sounds off repeatedly from distant ground perches, its resonant songs adding depth and breadth to the soundscape.

At dawn we will be greeted by a rousing chorus. But for now we are content to drift in and out of sleep, serenaded and caressed by the songs of the wind, the crickets, and the enchanting night-singing bird.

May 30, 1994 at 9pm. Apalachicola National Forest near Crawfordville, Florida. Recorded by Lang Elliott.