



La Horsa Bianca
POLEMOSOPHY

Weisskalt Records, 5 January 2024

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POLEMOSOPHY

is a suite
that takes a journey through our headspace
as we find ourselves in a war zone
the size of our entire country
(which is pretty damn big)

Various mental cul-de-sacs
where our minds get caught
transform into wordless stories
that help us become unstuck
at least for a bit

Let it take you somewhere
too

CREDITS

Eugene Manko: bass guitar
reface CS synthesizer
+
reface CP, reface YC, minilogue, Mel9-o-Tron
tenor sax (1,6,8), soprano sax (7), flute (2,7), xaphoon (8)
orchestral sounds programming [BBC SO Discover] (1,3,6)

Olga Ksendzovska:
(Xendza) digital pianos
upright piano (7)
theremin (4,5)

Kirill Gonchar: electric guitar
trumpet (6)

Andrew Brahin: electric guitar
classical guitar (4)
prepared classical guitar (4)

Ihor Avdeyev: drums

composed Nov–Dec 2022
recorded in temporary home studios throughout 2023
drums and mixing done at the Digout studio in Kharkiv, Ukraine
cover artwork by Xendza / Gonchar / Manko

Background

Disclaimer: The hope is, as always, that the music serves as something bigger than the initial idea, and transforms to something personal for whoever listens to it. The story of how it came about is optional. For those who want it to endepthen their experience, here it is:

We haven't been all in the same room together, let alone played as a band, since the wretched February of 2022 when #russiaisaterroriststate invaded Ukraine.

The skill of deeply listening to each other as we play had been our main focus of development up until then, and in one day this was taken away. As we grew accustomed to the new reality, scattered in various places across the country and the world, we came to understand that if we were to make any new music, it would have to be very different to everything we made before.

The challenges to overcome were numerous: from tackling the remote recording process with limited access to gear, to the more fundamental question of what this music could even be.

We wouldn't be able to pretend that our music exists in a parallel universe where there's no war; neither could we wrestle ourselves into making something decidedly uplifting, nor resort to the musical equivalent of primal scream therapy.

The angle had to be different, and it was:

- examine the mental states we go through day by day;
- notice that most of them are uncomfortable;
- notice that even the best ones contain an undercurrent of doom;
- notice that the shared undercurrent does not stop them from varying wildly;
- use those states as starting points and create something that serves as a way out of them.

The word "Polemosophy" in this context is to be understood as "knowledge of war"; a set of personal experiences. The other track names, adopted from existing Greek, mostly medical, terminology, are metaphors for the mental states that served as starting points for the compositions.

I wrote the entire album's worth of material in the last two months of '22 in the corner of my friend's apartment over 600 km from home, mostly using a Yamaha reface CS synthesizer and my bass guitar. The entire thing is a sort of suite where all the parts are connected and share motifs. It came out much more fully formed than I would normally do, when I could bring in raw ideas and develop them together with the band in the room — no such luxury this time. I still kept blank spots for everyone to fill in later though, which they did brilliantly when recording their parts, each in their own temporary home. Ihor's drums came last, laid down when he and I were able to get together back in our Kharkiv studio (another thing that makes this album different — you'd normally start with the drums).

There are no words or even vocals on the album, which is not a new thing with us, almost hardly worth mentioning. It's a "show, don't tell" kind of thing.

Whether it worked or not is out of our hands, now.

*Eugene
Kharkiv, Ukraine
2023*