



See Blue Audio – Press Release

'Empty Halls'

Substak

See Blue Audio SBA #061

1. Empty Halls

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See Blue Audio: ambient / electronic / beatless / cinematic / downtempo / eclectic / introspective... Shade rather than light...

If the previous release on See Blue Audio, 'Cartography of Sleep' by Droning Cats with NRV, was a soothing, meandering journey through the realm of sleep and a sublime autumn soundtrack, on its follow-up, we find ourselves in the dead of winter. It's also a speedy return for Substak, who reveals another dimension to his music with 'Empty Halls', a standalone longform track of abstract minimal drones with a frosty, detached atmosphere. As the sixtieth-first release on See Blue Audio and the first of 2026, this is an eerie, ghostlike sonic passage evoking a past time that's connected yet somehow feels distant from our own.

Back in March 2025, the label welcomed Substak, Athens-based electronic artist Kostas Staikos, with the 'Silent Observers' EP, five short but perfectly succinct tracks and a trip into the outer reaches of space and our imagination. It received much praise for its unsettling but contemplative qualities, receiving extensive radio play on Irish national radio as well as elsewhere. It also came at a particularly prolific creative period for the artist, who has built up an immense body of work across multiple and contrasting labels. Substak operates within three spheres: deep dub techno, meticulous ambient pieces, and extended abstract drone soundscapes. The 'Silent Observers' EP is from the second category and 'Empty Halls' from the third.

A 22-minute beatless drone piece may not be typical for See Blue Audio, but it's not without precedent: 'La Mer' and 'Animal Carnival' by Tanti Aglaia and longer tracks from Simon McCorry have ventured into similar territory. Experimentation is part of the label's ethos, so 'Empty Halls' has company in the See Blue Audio catalogue. It's

unmistakably Substak, however; in fact, one of the most remarkable aspects of his sound is that it is clearly and instantly recognisably Substak, whatever direction it's heading. His musical fingerprint is distinct and unique, even as it is difficult to define.

'Empty Halls' is as the title describes: a large, cavernous space, an ancient place perhaps, long uninhabited, where an eerie stillness pervades. The air is dry, and the sonic crackle serves as a layer of dust. Is that the distant hum of diabolical, archaic machinery in the background? Yet, through all this apparent emptiness, occasional flashes of primordial life permeate the subterranean world. There is a hint of chaos, an anxious moment that grabs our attention amidst the gloom. With every listen, 'Empty Halls' reveals something new and subliminal within its soundwaves. Maybe we hear things that are not really there but conjured from our imagination and transmitted through strange frequencies.

In keeping with the See Blue Audio visual aesthetic, 'Empty Halls' is also notable for its absence of humanity. The music evokes a sense of spaces, filled not with people, but with the echoes of what once was. This is a world of shadows, but where gears also turn and occasionally jolt to disrupt the heavy motion.

'Empty Halls' may function differently to the 'Silent Observers' EP, but they similarly have the ability to draw us deep into reflection. Both are immersive and contemplative, but 'Empty Halls' is a longer meditation, generating a haunting atmosphere that invites the listener to become lost inside its unfolding darkness. In this way, it can also provide peace and comfort in the darkness of wintertime.