

CORPUS CHRISTI LINER NOTES

written, recorded and produced by mummer

co-produced, mixed and mastered by Mark Warder

original album released 09/08/2019

remixed and remastered by mummer

got the idea for a redo on 13/06/2024

bulk of the work was done 20/07/2024 - 24/07/2024 in Kromeriz during a mosquito plague, with tweaks 04/08/2024 - 05/08/2024 dripping sweat in Baska Voda and a final pass back in Brighton 09/08/2024

Liner notes

my original inspirations for "Corpus Christi" were "Crack-Up" and "Helplessness Blues" by Fleet Foxes, "The Glow Pt. 2" by The Microphones, "In The Aeroplane Over The Sea" by Neutral Milk Hotel, "Forget" by Xiu Xiu, "Merriweather Post Pavillion", "Feels", "Sung Tongs" and "Ark" by Animal Collective, "Clouddead" by cLOUDDEAD, "Peasant" by Richard Dawson, "Loveless" by My Bloody Valentine, "Blonde" and "Endless" by Frank Ocean, the "Saturation Trilogy" from Brockhampton, "Atrocity Exhibition" by Danny Brown, "Neo Wax Bloom" by Iglooghost, "The Powers That B" by Death Grips, "You're Dead!" by Flying Lotus, "Currents" by Tame Impala...

...real mu/core fantano inxy stuff that it felt good to be a part of - i was living in the city for the first time and felt clued in on all the current, coolest stuff... though this broadening of tastes was a very necessary expansion from the near sole

influence Panda Bear/Animal Collective had on my music before this (see liner notes of my early stuff).

i wanted to make something incredibly deep, huge and epic on this one, multi-section collage songs inspired by "Crack-Up" and "The Glow Pt. 2", so i developed a ridiculous technique of maxing out garageband ipad files at 50 channels of layered audio, then bouncing that down by sampling the whole file to my SPD-SX sampler as a triggerable stem, then i would repeat the process 2 or 3 more times, meaning at any given moment in a track there is up to 200 channels of audio occurring simultaneously - yikes!

...though with all this rigorous bouncing down when i brought it to my dad to mix, each song only had 2 or 3 stems going on, which presented it's own challenges, eq and reverb/delay sends being our main tool there to separate things out a bit.

my initial idea was to have the whole album playable live, where i would provide live vocals as I triggered the stems of each new section on the SPD-SX via midi with the Beatstep Pro, but i didn't get any gigs and eventually I had to track it out to get some vocals recorded. i still have the SPD-SX file saved though, so theoretically i could still do it.

sound sources were: field recordings of Bristol and Puddletown, Microkorg, Zoom RhythmTrack 234, Teenage Engineering Pocket Operators (PO-32 Tonic and PO-20 Arcade), Roland SPD-SX, B*hringer delay pedal, BOSS HR-2 Harmoniser pedal, ZOOM 606 mutli-fx, Roland VT-4 voice transformer, Roland SP-404A.

while a few of the songs were written and some of the field recordings captured in the summer of 2018, near all the writing, recording and production of this album took place during my 1st year of Drawing and Print at UWE in Bristol - especially the first term where I coasted a bit to dedicate most of my time to making music.

I was living in the student accommodation Transom House and would drive myself nuts with cabin fever slogging away at this project in my tiny room. when I listen back to this album now it screams of undiagnosed neurodivergency: angsty songs about bad breakups and feeling misunderstood. I developed a dogged work ethic, shirking parties, nights out and most socialising other than my flatmates in service of making my "masterpiece". I also started to be obsessed with legacy and cult status, that one day this work would get the (fantano (ew)) recognition and acclaim to absolve all my personality flaws, social awkwardness

and missed experiences, like my issues would make it all worth it through delayed success. I loved albums with a huge mythos around them, of a spent genius pouring every ounce of their being into their art, like Jeff Mangum with "In The Aeroplane Over The Sea" or Kevin Shields on "Loveless".

this was obviously an unhealthy coping mechanism for the stresses of living away from home for the first time. staking my entire sense of self worth and emotional wellbeing on the progress of this album left me prone to frequent burn outs and bouts of depression when I'd hit inevitable lulls in creativity or dead ends. one day I had an existential crisis, realising that if the whole world ended then there won't be anyone around to appreciate a "sleeper hit". the "legacy" of a digital album is dependent on the internet and humans using it, so why should I be so fixated on an imagined future that is so unpredictable/unlikely? towards the end of making this album I ended entering a far more healthy long term relationship, I committed to my painting course and I generally felt much better mentally after the catharsis of these songs, so since then my practice has become a lot more transient and a lot more personal - all for me and my own self improvement rather than in the hope of some latent success.

Vocals

Corpus Christi was also the last record I did with my own vocal (or, to clarify, my own vocal singing a written song with lyrics - I still use my own voice on a lot of tracks, but none recognisably so as here). my production skills were always way better than my vocal abilities, and tracking vocals was a torture I always dreaded in the album making process, putting it off for as long as I could. while the vocal is eerily, candidly bad on an early project like "Furze Cutter Chorus", as my production skills improved on "Song Cycle Spring", my vocals did not rise to meet it, with the quality of the song reduced drastically when the vox comes in on "Grander Cattle", "Under the Greenwood Tree" and "May Day".

I think the vocal is pretty solid on most of Corpus Christi, maybe because I was trying out different stuff with my voice and matching the vibe of each track accordingly, rather than badly attempting Panda Bear harmonies on everything - which was my main process before, even though I for sure did not have the vocal skills for it.

I was going for a bit of a breathy Xiu Xiu kind of quaver on "Seraphim", with shots of forest child group vocals inspired by early Animal Collective. I listened to Swans and Xiu Xiu's cover of "Under Pressure" around this time and really admired Michael Gira's intensity on every performance he does, even a fun Queen cover. it made me realise a vocal could sound like anything, so long as the vocalist commits and does it with absolute earnestness.

"Drunk" starts screamy, which I always wished I'd distorted more (remedied on this version). later on it has a really satisfying group vocal, where I recorded each layer imagining a totally different personality for each: wobbly falsetto, gravelling low, tone deaf, monotone. lots of fun when they're combined together.

"Sarabande" had an acoustic performance where the emotion carried it, "Gigue" I went heavy with the autotune for an accordion voice autocrooner thing, with lots of it reversed and layered too for a cool counter melody.

the vocal is pretty sweet in the first section of "Dappled", but then it gets weak, out of tune and unsure in the second and third sections -. it was a really hard to sing against the 3/4 section of the track, so we buried it in reverb to try and save it. probably should've been an instrumental, or I should've cut the middle 3/4 section entirely. also I realised much later the vocal on the last section is the tune of "Winter's Love" by Animal Collective... oh well

half the vocals on Corpus Christi were also recorded secretly in public in Temple Gardens, a small park with some church ruins across the street from my student halls. I wrote a good chunk of the lyrics in this park, watching the rats, robins and squirrels, plus generally escaping the cabin fever of my tiny uni room.

after spending a lot of time on the instrumentals, I knew i had to record the vocals at some point, but i was too self-conscious about doing it when i knew flatmates were home and could overhear, especially this one horrible flatmate next door to me who loved d'n'b. there was one great morning when i realised everyone else had timetabled lessons and i didn't, so i could get all the screamer vocals for "Seraphim" and "Drunk" out the way, but for the rest the only way to tackle my self-consciousness was to record in a far more unnatural and awkward way: soft singing into my phone in a public park, then running away to hide behind the Temple Church ruins when anyone came by, which is why the middle section of "Dappled" is so weak and inconsistent - they vocals drop out and waver as I was running around avoiding people.

at best this secret public recording process took the pressure off endless takes to try and nail a perfect vocal performance, and it removed the stress of flatmates overhearing. it also added loads of extra birdsong to the recordings, which adds a super specific character to the album that I appreciate.

My vocal abilities peaked here and I didn't really feel like singing or songwriting in this way on any other projects after, partly because it was too much faff and partly because I felt mentally much better and didn't have anything angsty to write about that I needed a catharsis for. it took a while for me to work out how to make music without a vocal as an immediate focal point though, my many lengthy experiments in this captured on the next 5 or so records after this one.

I asked my dad to help me mix Corpus Christi because I didn't know how to use logic and wanted a second pair of ears on it. I learnt a ton watching him put it together in his little loft studio. automation and bus fx especially blew my mind and are both tools I employ with maniacal detail nowadays. his mix still holds up, and I consider that the definitive version still.

there's a few reasons I wanted to do this 2024 redo:

first I have two other Corpus Christi related albums in my bandcamp privates/archive-

- one is bounces of the original GarageBand files I recorded the vocals on, with the vox way clearer and therefore easier to isolate through noise gates and eq

- the other is my own version of Corpus Christi I put together for fun from the stems on my ancient desktop computer running Logic 8 after learning about automation from my dad, with a slightly different mix and arrangement but none of the eq or fx which makes the released version work best

I liked the idea of combining these three versions and pushing the original idea of the hugest, deepest sound possible, with more of the psychedelic squall of my current noise-embracing stuff. in my current practice I do a lot of transformative master bus processing of stereo eurorack patches or my own live performances, so I thought it would be fun to take these older tracks and subject them to the same treatment.

the remix i did for Jae's track "The Butcher", released on "How It Feels To Drink Pondwater", is one of my favourite bits of noise I've ever made. it was super rewarding taking a friend's track that I already thought was perfect and finding a completely new feeling and meaning for it, plus i really enjoyed working with a vocal again and being able to reflect the meaning of the lyrics through very exaggerated production methods.

i liked the idea of discovering new feelings, textures and perhaps even getting closer to the original feeling of the "Corpus Christi" tracks (e.g. angst, frustration, cathartic purging of relationship trauma) through wracking and crumpling the whole track to fit the emotion of the vocal performances.

lastly there's details of the original that always bothered me that I wanted to fix or reclaim through destruction. I usually keep to the folkloric idea of intentional dropping a stitch/leaving the odd error in a project for humility, which in more superstitious times was to avoid inciting divine wrath and hubris, though for me it's more about choosing a final little detail not to correct as a definitive stopping point for the project. that last uncorrected error becomes a declaration of completion and staves off the dangerous temptation and ADHD/OCD/autistic tunnel vision of endless tweaking and polishing.

but it's also super satisfying to correct bothersome errors too, and most tracks I release now get an update a month or so after release once I've had time to sit with it and imagine it's best possible form. so this redo corrects some of my annoyance with the original, first and foremost the vocal on "dappled".

here's individual track breakdowns, first with recollections of making the track in 2019, then a short word on the techniques employed on the 2024 redo.

cherabim and seraphim (seraphim 2024 redo):

here's a collage of time-stretched coffee machine sounds and rusty seaside gates, scratchy violin drones, a cacophony of rickety doors (just one rickety door pitched and layered on ipad garageband), bagpipes sampled from youtube (more on this in the "pissing in self-defence (drunk 2024 redo" section) and

garageband's own metronome, rerecorded from my ipad's own mic then chopped and pitched into a melody.

this one bin truck would come by the window of my uni room everyday at 5am and i went insane for a week trying to wake up just in time to capture it. I'd set alarms and sleep with my field recording microphone on my pillow but I'd always just miss it, and in my delirious dream state it always sounded totally heavenly. I got it in the end but it never sounded quite so good as all the dreamy times i missed it.

at the end there's chewy pitched vocals from the first artsy sound installation I did in college - contact mic vocals through a Zoom fx pedal - which was essentially my first musical work produced as "mummer".

2024 mix notes - this one was hardest because it already sounded pretty good, probably because it had the least layers and cleanest bass of any of the Corpus Christi tracks when I mixed it with my dad. just a noise gated, hard clipped vocal extract from the demo version and a network of saturation busses/icky bubbly pitch shifters for this one, plus lots of lovely phasing and comb filtering from layers of the backing subtly cancelling one another out. I also reversed some layers of the vocal in some bits, because rhyming words end up irritating me loads when working on a track lots and I mostly like to treat the vocal as just another musical texture, like on "bear cult booze up" (2024). the clash of reversed and non reversed creates a nice chaos and I like the seesaw between legible and illegible.

lyrics:

Alice said

to be folky

make drones on

virginity

but that place makes

me hesitate

those songs end up

exposés

not willing

to spill the dirt

I still need a mode

to purge this hurt

the fantasy

of L'Esparrou

looms rich and ripe

as yet unused

I'd like to

draw and sing

to stop the

bad feelings

that start to

fester and sting

if they

accumulate within

the neatest

exorcism

is not tainted

with scorn

I'd like to

draw and sing

but I need to

be reborn

if I'm not

myself anymore

I can't say

who that dude was

I just sing

from this cavern of moss

I'm off the rocks

and can sing about the storm

frayed are the ties that bind us

they snapped and then you left me to

tease out all the fibers all left behind

flesh deep, and all buried

but in the deep winter

I would accept anything

the wool over my eyes was soft and warm

your furnace stayed steadfast

despite the freeze and hoarfrost

in your womb I weathered the worst of the storms

but then in the springtime

that waste became so heinous

the surplus between us was too much to bear

but sweltering through summer

is no place for a jumper

the ties that had bound us were starting to tear

I'm a community spirit

who needs his personal space

I need money and seclusion both before I feel safe

home alone I lose my drive and I go feral at night

these are the things that will spur me to flight

incontinent dog-son (sarabande 2024 redo):

2024 mix notes - (since this one has been transformed quite drastically)

originally a soupy housey droney thing, I edited this one down heavily to put more focus on what I think the best section is - a tearful performance of an acoustic guitar song I wrote just before moving to uni... as yet the only acoustic guitar song I've written. after getting back from End Of The Road festival 2018 i had 4 days before moving to Bristol and the Adventure Time finale had just released. it emotionally destroyed me way more than I'd thought it would - it hit me all at once childhood was ending, encapsulated in the last episode of my favourite show that helped me through years of teen angst. i wrote the song immediately after watching the finale and always wished I'd recorded a version right there and then whilst bawling my eyes out, but that probably would've been way too personal to use. the two recordings I went with (and layered up here) were also both captured after a teary finale rewatch. one I did naked and hungover on my uni room floor for maximum feral AT energy, the other when my gf was away in cz, so i could use her bigger and more sonically isolated room for it.

I always imagined a Sufjan Stevens pretty delicacy for this track, but when I processed that naked first recording on garageband I ended up pushing it into uncanny territory through extreme pitch shifting, time stretch, excessive reverb and eq. I remember thinking huh.. even though this wasn't what I initially had in mind, I've discovered something really cool here and should go with it... which is a creative mindset I was actively suppressing during the making of Corpus Christi, to try and reach the (unrealistic) masterpiece I had in my head, that I totally cherish in my practice now.

I also used a couple of b-sides from the making of "Corpus Christi", one a musique concrete track of steam train field recordings from M-Shed I put together whilst getting my head round Logic 8, the other a shepherd's song from (i think?) Thomas Hardy's "Far From The Madding Crowd", where I recorded the vocal (I did this sort of thing a lot on earlier records, such as "Song Cycle Spring") and layered it with my newly acquired SP-404A, with sub bass from it's silly little "subsonic" effect.

this of course needed hard clipping and saturation in this version, as I love when sub frequencies modulate and saturate other parts of a track when all bussed through one distortion. the acoustic performance was already pretty squashed through garageband compression, so all that needed was some EQ and limiting.

lyrics:

with the rose and the lily

and the proud daffodilly

we go hand in hand

a-sheep shearing we go

my summer ends with Adventure Time

that mature kind of autumnal light dried up my laughter lines I was

crying for the end of those fictional lives

the reset of the cycle and some scheduling so aptly timed for

four days to remember all the places that I'll come to miss

and savour up the last sips of that oh so bittersweet starter dish

people talk about the fun of escaping all the boredom here

but not willing to swap the city for my small village

I love this place

only cause I'll leave this place

in four days

peeing in self-defence (drunk 2024 redo):

this track has a Big Lez Show sample, we watched the last episode as a flat on my 20th birthday. didgerdoo type drones were created amplifying and pitching the ground hum of my guitar pedal chain on the aux send of my mixer. pedals used were the BOSS HR-2 and ZOOM 606. big whoosy hits are a field recording of a rainy day street sweeper slammed by garageband compression, layered with this one sample I absolutely rinsed of a big vintage marching drum that was in my parent's living in Puddletown - for some reason i was obsessed with the idea that every new collage section needed a big boomy hit, to arrive with maximum impact on this record. there's Zoom RhythmTrack 234 drums and percussive mandolin string hits (like a hammered dulcimer), plus a drunk new year's eve audio message from my mate, Bristol church bells and Bonfire Night fireworks.

this track was the super necessary purging of a really bad break up, so lyrics are all angst about that, though I also recognise the screamingly obvious undiagnosed autism as well - frustrations about being misunderstood and forced to pretend to be someone I'm not during a disastrous girlfriend family visit when I was 18, then looking at the repercussions of that on a failed relationship at the start of uni.

the second section was all chopped up from one youtube video of a bagpipe troupe using practice chanters at a bagpipe festival, with a drum troupe in the background. i did all the chopping and arranging in one obsessive afternoon with my garageband ipad app. to derive a sort of hip-hop sub bass i low pass filtered and bass cranked chops of the pipes and hit it with an insane garageband reverb called "Moon Dome". i remember my dad isolating the stem when he had a look at the project for the first time and went "fucking hell" when he saw the bass boost I'd done on it (haha). i always thought this was one of the most emotional tunes I'd managed to get into any of my tracks, its has a yearning pastoral quality to it. there's also some Aeolian wind harp samples to reference Thomas Hardy's "The Trumpet Major", an idyllic portrait of where i grew up heavy with the author's own nostalgia for times he never knew.

the third section is unique to this version, a b-side from the making of "Corpus Christi". this was at first an unintentional cover. in the process of chopping and pitching the YouTube bagpipes + snares, I reckoned one section sounded like the humming vocal loop + drumline of Gwen Stefani's "Hollaback Girl", so for a while

I imagined this as a cute cover to whip out at those aforementioned Bristol live shows that I never ended up doing. I added field recordings of a bonfire night fireworks display at Queen' Park in Bristol, PO-32 distorted brassy synth bass and mad Zoom drum machine tom + ride patterns inspired by Panda Bear's hilariously hated remix of Interpol's "All The Rage Back Home".

for a few weeks I was listening to Tame Impala's "Currents" over and over, and I loved the start of "Eventually" where there's this naughty low sub bass mostly in the audible range, but there's exactly one note that goes really really low, so I used the MicroKorg "Hip Hop Sub Bass" (or something) preset to do a similar thing, which tears the track up amazingly with all the saturation I've put on in this version. I think I didn't end up using this track on the original because I was finding it super hard to get this track sounding as loud and punchy as the others with so much of the headroom taken up by the 3 layered bass parts.

2024 mix notes - I added in field recordings of a thunderstorm from a July 2022 holiday in Croatia for some cleaner, separated sub bass. this also provided a layer with more dynamics and headroom to contrast the brickwall saturation, creating a sense of naturalistic background space against the intense distorted foreground. distortion was crucial to give the track more intensity and crisp up the vocals - I was going for something similar to my "The Butcher" remix here.

I went back and forth a lot on the first section, indecisive if I wanted it to hit hard like the original or start mushy and fade in against the field recordings for something different. I think I struck a balance in the end... hard mush, starting with the strangely percussive bass of the thunder storm then hard cutting to the intro. in the beginning it's a bit of a dance between different echo, hard clip and grainy texture sends, but it settles into one pummelling mode for the majority of the runtime after that.

lyrics:

I've been stuck between tales of boat trips and family Christmases

but now with craft beer I can appear to be interested
these pompous expats no they don't see shit because
my constant fidgeting stopped the bales filling with piss

oh I smile and I nod, am I doing it right?

I mean, how could any these fucks possibly need my insight on this

shit I don't know and won't ever in my life

but please please please just

try get them to like you

be flippant

to protect your passions

and joke about

what you love most

see I know that

you're nice enough in time

but for now just fake a smile and laugh

try to be

somewhat outgoing

and make them think

you're having a laugh

see I know that

you're nice enough in time

but for now just fake a smile and laugh

we rushed this and now I'm feeling so guilty

our "yeeting" got irritating way too quickly

you see we're two butterflies locked in a downward spiral

we're falling in tandem, theres no sign of survival

but you told me you were leaving and I felt relieved, because

our horoscopes said we wouldn't last Halloween

you see a flash in the pan lacks the heat that we need

to last bitter winter just like [ex's name] and me

but clearly those feelings aren't all that they seem

i mean so what if I don't feel so head over heels this time?

bonfire night was freezing emotionally

your defensive cynicism gets so demeaning

but you told me you'd stay and I felt cheated

because it soon came apparent how much you need me

so once you were staying I felt so guilty

because I never didn't need someone once they needed me

temple gardens hymn (dappled 2024 redo):

the bass was created amplifying the ground hum loop of my guitar pedal chain on the aux send of my mixer with the ZOOM 606, then pitching the hum into a paraphonic flute-like melody and bass line with the BOSS HR-2.

late night screeching tube trains (recorded after seeing John Hopkins and George Fitzgerald at Brixton in November 2018 with my dad, which i got a legendary fever after) build intensity, my mum's beloved dinging grandfather clock and time-stretched morris dancing bells provide rhythm against a ZOOM drum machine. there's buzzing bees and squeaking tree branches buried in there too.

i sampled a lot of an anime called "Mushi-Shi" i was watching like crazy. every saturday, as a break from working on music, i'd get myself really nice soba noodles and organic soy sauce from the health food shop and eat it whilst watching "Mushi-Shi", which a brief ex at the start of my first year at uni put me onto.

this song is partly about her, but more recognising patterns in all my relationships - that old undiagnosed autism back at it again... but mostly this song is about that

one awful break a year and half before this that “drunk” is also about... the Mushi-Shi ex is referenced in “drunk” also, but it’s all more introspection for me rather than a hit piece on anyone, self-therapising through music, a crucial catharsis.

I became really fixated on having brass parts on this record, as I loved when a folky or indie band would get a brass group in to make their sound more majestic and rich, such as Fleet Foxes on "Crack-Up". originally I wanted my trumpet player friend Joe to multitrack some parts and I'd pitch shift them on my end, but he was too busy becoming a famous climber. then when me and my dad went to the Brainfeeder 10th anniversary show in London on December 2018 there was a Christmas brass band playing at Victoria Station that I sampled. not sure why I used it here, it's totally discordant with the vocal and was probably better off left out.

2024 mix notes - this track was the main reason for doing this, the vocal being my main target. just as the track enters its middle section and switches to 3/4 (which in itself was a horrible choice, spoiling the flow of that majestic 4/4 build) the vocal falters, chokes and kills the vibe. my answer was to make the entire middle section a confusing chaos to give the vocal context for being so whack, emphasising the track's lack of payoff by having it totally collapse in on itself right after it's peak, similar to Brian Chippendale's philosophy for his solo project Black Pus. I thought this was a pretty fun concept for a closer as well, a gorgeous build that ultimately devolves into chaos. for the discordant and confused final section I also embraced the whackness and did a bunch of off-kilter flex time shifts to make it all just pure erratic.

the whole track is actually flex timed faster, and pitched down after many stages of saturation. I like that this version ended up way more vocal driven, it feels a lot more like a hymn now, hence the title "temple gardens hymn", named after where the lyrics were written and partly recorded.

lyrics:

the wasps and bees

are interested

in the golden ichor covering my arm

this vein was tapped

by the tarmac

like sap from another pine tree

teach me to be

as strong as thee

who stretch so sure in company

or I fear I'll crack

my bark will crack

I'll lose my vitamin D

but damn the flow and stay stoic

the forest creatures they cannot know

that left alone my courage grows

a brook so strong from melted snow

that storm did go

that broke my bough

the one red sky scarlet foretold

and basking slow

in Ra's rich glow

a clear canopy goes to show

your impatience on the perch looses sleep, little robin

the city can learn about peace, in time

but as blatant as city rats in hedges

brazen as birdsong against grime

it's melancholy as sex in the sunlight

shameful as wasted daytime

I plunge into childlike abandon

repentant for making you mine

on goes the Adventure Time

your impatience on the perch looses sleep, little robin

the city can learn about peace, in time

but as blatant as city rats in hedges

brazen as birdsong against grime

we're songbirds on separate branches

straining to sing against drunks and car alarms

but autumn won't stop for a robin

so don't will away winter so fast

savour what's never meant to last

dark clouds may stay

don't go away

they're dapples between the rays