Folk Images Paul Lansky

The instruments are guitar, violin, computer, occasional voice; the music, some settings and arrangements of well-known folk songs as well as several original folk-like pieces. Folk music lovers will undoubtedly say it's not really folk music (they're right); computer music aficionados and cyberspace cadets may not think of it as computer music (maybe they're right too), and guitar freaks will say our guitar is not nearly as good as Leo Kottke's (oh boy are they right). Though it's not a bad thing to defy description, the best way to understand the music is probably found in the title, Folk Images. At the risk of seeming overly metaphorical I'll say that these images are not photographs, but rather paintings of folk music, with some awkward and blurry features, and just enough peculiarity to make them seem unusual, even though they strain to appear realistic—not unlike the work of some recent painters whose canvasses have a photographic quality but still are obviously paintings.

This is also folk music filtered through the ears of a composer (and folk music lover, senior cyberspace cadet, certified guitar-freak) with his own particular history: growing up in N.Y.C. in the 1950's; High School of Music and Art, Buck's Rock Work Camp, Ethical Culture Society; Sundays in Washington Square Park listening to Eric Weissberg and Dave Van Ronk (and hoping to meet girls); enjoying The New Lost City Ramblers, Reverend Gary Davis, Pete Seeger, Elizabeth Cotton, WWVA, Earl Scruggs, Lester Flatt, Merle Travis; struggling on his own to master 3-finger picking; hearing Berio, Wolpe, Cage, Feldman, and Vivaldi at the New School; meeting Varèse taking his evening

stroll on Bleeker Street; playing Berlioz and Mendelssohn with the All City Orchestra on Saturday mornings.

These pieces, arrangements, and settings attempt to distill, emulate, and paraphrase some of the things I love best about folk music: jangling, frantic guitar sounds; melancholy tunes which have aged just enough to sound distant and odd; triumphant displays of 'sold your soul to the devil' virtuosity; nostalgia for the 1930's (I recently heard a prominent rock critic quip that the folk music revival in the 50's was probably a plot of the Communist Party and the M.L.A..) Finally, as in many of my other pieces, where I attempt to confront our perceptions of things which we take for granted, these highly filtered images of folk music are meant to develop new perspectives. But, in order to capture the feel of sweaty, human effort, which is such an important aspect of this music, they avoid the leap into the domain of the experimental or avant-garde. All but two of the pieces are purely instrumental. (I never did work up an interest in the words; so many of the texts, three in this set, in fact, are about lovers killing each other.)

The pieces can be taken in on many levels: from the complex—the rhythm in *Delia*, the intonation in *Pretty Polly* and *Barbara Allen*, or some of the computer techniques—to the simple: *Ash Grove* and *Wayfaring Stranger* are just great tunes. There should be something here for folk music lovers, computer music fans and guitar junkies. In the end, however, I hope the listener can just enjoy these pieces with the same kind of basic pleasure that one gets from listening to the best of folk music—sit back and sing along.

1 Strut: An original piece, inspired by, and emulating, an image of feverish 12-string guitar picking. An overture and warm-up for the set.

2 Tender Ladies: A setting of Come all ye fair and tender ladies, made famous by Pete Seeger. This slightly different version is taken from the extraordinary anthology by Cecil

- Sharp, English Folk Songs From the Southern Appalachians; Oxford University Press [1932, reprinted 1966].
- 3 Delia: A setting of a song about a poor young woman, shot by her lover, Tony, on Christmas eve. 'First time he shot her, she bowed her head and died'. (Oh brother). Johnny Cash; Peter, Paul and Mary; as well as a number of others have recorded versions of this.
- 4 Ash Grove: A famous English tune. That's me singing in the distant background. Don't try to make out the words.
- 5 Hammer: An original piece, wistfully imagining a horde of busy hammer dulcimer players having fun.
- 6 Barbara Allen: A setting of a very famous tune. The version here is one of the lesser-known variants, taken from Cecil Sharp's anthology—young lovers dying young. This setting attempts to be a little more gritty than most (usually lush) settings of this tune I've heard. (Check out the digital jaws harp).
- 7 Howl: An original piece which attempts to tune into the spirit of low, funky, exuberant blues, inspired by the master of that genre, Howling Wolf.
- 8 *Pine Ridge*: An original piece based on a simple pentatonic tune, dedicated to the memory of the awful event at Wounded Knee.
- 9 Wayfaring Stranger: I'm just a poor, wayfaring stranger..., a setting of a song made famous by Burl Ives, who occasionally went by this handle as well.

10 Pretty Polly: A setting of a famous tune, sometimes known as The Demon Lover. This is one of several versions from Cecil Sharp's anthology. The text deals with pregnancy, delusion, murder, ghosts. (What is it with these guys.)

11 Blue Wine: An original piece which tries, with a great deal of effort, to capture some of the spirit of a bending, whining, blues guitar. Something different emerges, but that's ok.

12 Motherless Child: A setting of one of the most famous and beautiful spirituals. The barely intelligible voice is mine. You know the words.

Some technical details: These pieces are culled from two suites. Tender Ladies, Pretty Polly, Pine Ridge, and Barbara Allen were made in 1981 on an IBM mainframe, using linear predictive coding to model the violin playing of Cyrus Stevens. The rest were all done in 1991-1993 on a NeXT computer using a variety of sources and techniques: the composer's voice, his trusty Gibson LG-3 guitar, midi data capture, digital modelling, synthesis, mixing, editing, and other good stuff. (For more information tune your web browser to http://www.music.princeton.edu/~paul).

Paul Lansky, 7/95

Executive Producer: David Starobin Photo: Becky Singing, Lida Walker Askew

Cover Design: Digital Chameleon Typography: Robert Starobin

Other recordings of music by Paul Lansky

Smalltalk: New Albion Records, CD NA030: Smalltalk, Guy's Harp, Late August, Not So Heavy Metal

Homebrew: Bridge Records Inc., BCD 9035: Table's Clear, Night Traffic, Now and Then, Quakerbridge, The Sound of Two Hands

More Than Idle Chatter: Bridge Records Inc., BCD 9050 Idle Chatter, Word Color, just_more_idle_chatter, The Lesson, Notjustmoreidlechatter, Memory Pages

Fantasies and Tableaux: CRI, CD 683: Six Fantasies on a poem by Thomas Campion, Still Time

in collections...

As it grew dark: Wergo 2031-2 Computer Music Currents, vol.11

Wasting: (With Brad Garton and Andy Milburn) Centaur CRC 2076, Inner Voices

As If: (string trio and computer): Centaur CRC 2110, Virtuoso in the Computer Age-I

Stroll: (chamber ensemble and computer): Centaur CRC 2213 Composer In the Computer Age- III

Hop: (marimba and violin): Marimolin, BMG/Catalyst 62667-2, Combo Platter

Folk Images Paul Lansky

5377769	Section 2	200	the was also	CT 127.005	810,4137	732277320	(February)	(Assessed)		COMPANY CHES			Birthon de	THE REAL PROPERTY.	F - manife
Stee 1	(Color Sec.)	05 22000	Description	A 13000	MINNEY.		S. S. James a	The second of	(200 mms		CONTRACTOR	COLUMN TO SERVICE STATE OF THE PERSON NAMED IN COLUMN TO SERVICE STATE OF THE PERSON NAMED STATE OF THE PERSON NAMED STATE OF THE PERSON NAMED STATE OF THE PERSON NAM	(SSS) (MANUAL PROPERTY AND PROP		the same
والد جعتهما	20022000	100 NO WY	100 100	6 F W.	1.1996	No. of Lot	A CONTRACTOR	1 4000	254400	Seamer 242	Spanned A	Contract Co.	22700004	St. Vennus I	25 (46)
964 172	(Company)	285 3M-1441		C A Per-	t collect.	100 mm / h / T		Corp. At No.	Distriction	DOME OF		OCCUPATIONS	Till a state of	T-18/80-14	2
57 92390	Similar pro-	ROLL COLD	Simple Con-		MINDSON.	000000000000000000000000000000000000000	CHOPPING (diam.co	PERSONAL PROPERTY.	CONTENTS:	Section 1997	89.00E0.0	SEPTIME NO. 7 HO	0.00	(MO1-11946)
10	PARKS.	30 to more than	ANN PARTY	The America	CAPMARIN	Withhard St.	SERVICE STATE	5-oterosca	SUNTENDE		247-449	1512000	SUMME	CALL MANAGED	SECTION SECTIO
NEW YORK	STATE OF THE PARTY.	1000	7799523	SHEET	277220	PARMITTER	Contract Con	(16 mm mark)			1000	District Co.	Contract of	CONTRACT OF A	NAME OF TAXABLE PARTY.
		De												4-4	
		is													
														, 12	
1000	الواهندو	A CONTRACTOR OF THE PARTY OF	Service (C)	CCC+008	paradali()	CHECKER		170 P.M				SCHOOL SEC	Characters.	Service 1	STATE OF
deplete.	STATE OF	Conference (St.)	periodit	Name and	Service (C	Desta na Chi	Service .	Distance.	PROFESSION	PERSONAL PROPERTY.	ST 250	What was a find	Septem.	Company March	SEPHANIS
Printed Street	12000	- (Elevatori A)	C225556	in NOS	22.006	CONTRACTOR OF	0.7 (0.00)	THE REST OF			1255		CONTRACTOR OF STREET	OCTOWNS	9992750
MMERCO	Variable !	CORNER PRINT	min (2)	reselvici	Supplied to	CHARLES	Statute 10	27527-955	PERCENT.	properties (DIFFERENCE OF	being 15-15	SENSON, N	Service.
to-rischi	CO. CO. CO.	NAME OF TAXABLE PARTY.	10.10 (E)	PHOSE	- TO THE R. P. LEWIS CO., LANSING, MICH.	Charlemon (2)	SCHOOL STATE	Party and	30000000	EPLOXINAMAN []	March 257	SPORTS NO.	STREET, STREET	Turb weather DOL	0.000
100	The second	MORAHAMINE	2.270	(Control of	STATE OF THE PARTY.	DYSMENICS	Section 1970	(55741446)	CANADONS	COMMON TO	Seven.	NEW YORKS	March 1979	(S) persent	200
1000	*******	100000000000000000000000000000000000000	*PARTY.	Contraction of the Contraction o	****	200000000000000000000000000000000000000	ARTHUR DESIGNATION AND PROPERTY.	SERVICE OF	Chemin Local	0.000		CONTRACTOR OF STREET	POSTGRANGE	A DESCRIPTION OF	The Secretary
6	1,7270	T 10 1000	500c 100	(America)	227354	Alle	C12190001		UESTEDBO	Dynamics Addition	(CONTROL	Shirt read	STORES OF	3:2	DECEMBER OF THE PERSON OF THE
100	and the	20		-	200	23112		SP#MUS	20.00				A Ministra	STATE SECTION	0.00
m ra	5*********		6-65		ं क द्राप्ता		20.0	CHOCK	CHELMONICOL	Street, Square, Square		20000000	Springer, co.		5,446-145
mineral (P-955	4000000000	INDENIOR	Control (ii)	n - said	mark (Carlotte	04339160	Fabrible (C)		10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 1		200	A mount of	official extensions	ETC TOOL
-		WARMAN CO.		Probability.	1000	DEAL PROPERTY.		District C	OPPROVIDE STREET	DOMESTIC STREET		MANAGE		Spirotes (4	100000
22.752	Maria Paris	Charles Hall	Name of Street	200	Armen's	CONTRACTOR.	Part Action		religioner, for	CONTRACTOR OF STREET	Service.	Comment	Or State Laboration Co.	STORY STREET	Primer ALL
7	Fire Hotel	Ho		33.00	HHIDS	100000000000000000000000000000000000000	New Holid	September 177	DOMESTIC STREET			032220	(0.00mm/4)	4:3	N-0-00
0.71553	Santa A.C.	COMMODIS	and married	911-920	Sec. of the	CHARLEST	Brooks SC.	DOMESTIC OF THE PERSON OF THE	ON BAYOU	200 E P 6 100		PO 14399	Addition to the	RESERVED FOR	(0.75
1	Springers)		ووالتمحو	Section 2	Name of	leje	SHIPPE	200	CHIMNES	974		02012003	والمعاملة والمتارك	4:4	90444-00
ren design	The state of the s	100		0.00		B ()	H-956	tradelini (SECTION.	350444400			(SHORM)	The resident	250,000
Marie State	Constitute.	MEDICAL SERVICE	in the second	(4 UH)	35,235	APPROXIMATE	100000	SHEETING.	100	ENGINEERING CO.	Maria I M	DESTRUCTION OF	CONTRACTOR	CLEH WINNE	100
272.504	AND SHOP	CHICAGO PAR	Albert (1922)	000000	9146660	ETCHA COST	by which is		(Contract)	200000410000		20122100	Market (c)	Market Control	lancation (2)
innica)		Principles (SA)				79-50-00-15	1000	A SHARRY	3000000	SAME AND A SECOND			T15000	CHE STRAIGHT.	promine.
223000	name (V)	HECORESIN.	MANUFACTURE OF THE PARTY OF THE		you do	32223190	(PERMIT)	1000	Theresee Like		Married L	120225800	Distance in	200	opening 32
	cerelisi;	100,000,000		125	encrista.	and the same of	Secretal Bu	Name and Post	DE MICHAEL	PROPERTY	PERMANE.	Street Section		454 X 125	150-00-02
New YORK				NEW HOLK		10:19:40:10	100			SHEW COLUMN TO SELECT		SCHWARDS	532755	Brighttening	
5.5650	14.76	1200	MEGIS		KK-2800	234676	200 HEAD		VARIOUS	DATE OF THE REAL PROPERTY.	(EXT-1050)		A HARRY	Contraction of	America.
A 1075/97	Marrie (K)	100 miles (100)	Section 2017		NAME OF TAXABLE PARTY.	3 20 20 20	GRANDST.	COLUMN TO SERVICE	3.777760	Thirt Street Co.	5594 (SS			200	M 1000
Fin-III (2)	Control of the	THE STATE OF		erently.	122(0)	remaind a	455122391	PHONE STA	3000 E	BEAMBOTH (I)		man-visio	200	PERSONAL PROPERTY.	a standard light
25.0	MARKET .	the name 1983	H+ 2000	100	STORY OF	2500	MW MES	Carried I	Service State	DO A BURNOSS	preside		CHARLES	10 100 e	7 40 CC
60 1	22085	E	1000	Pt 1 10	255	100.00	2.55 599	market berge	1007150	DAINTENANTAL		Drew 230	0000000	2170	55.56
55.6 4	W-1885	ore more di	100	熱洗涤	Street S	MARK SILL	14.75 356	240620000	Section 1985		Dec 30		444000	per golfs, T	and the
23.49	mano de la	100	Post Service	and the same of	MANAGE CO.	THE RESERVE	micro 222		HARMSON CO.		944-35	2212510	STREET, ST.	1414 (1404)	THE RESERVE
OH SHEET	2000/200	STATE OF THE OWNER,		MARKET T	enc 805	NAMES OF TAXABLE PARTY.	STORY CONTRACT		WATER VIEW	STATE AND ADDRESS. THE		PALADOS I		CHARLEST	77 75 SO T
53600	1000	HAVE CONTRACT	March 199	OCCUPANTS.	Spines Of A	CARREST PLANS	Services Co.	central l		ENVIRONMENTS.	See .	POPPING.	water St.	Report (SANC)	1000
4.50	MH1602	real state of the	D-1-322	2000	14980	11.254E/76	own yes		THE PARTY AND	200	Bherry		mark to the same	on more	10000000
may 11	000064	100.00	1000	remark.	m 11	-	PECHENIS	my William	100000000000	Form Marrie (U.S.)	EEE O D	Name of Street	or two could be	ALC: HARAGE	77.75.550
-06E-2		Bu	STATE OF	A115	4 2 3			::-:::::::::::::::::::::::::::::::::::	100000	Constitution (C)	825 JUN	NAME OF TAXABLE PARTY.	440.400	3:3	2000 379
455	March Co.	District Colon	200	22.952	66-14-152		*************************	The second second	and deposit of the	CONTRACTOR CO.	60.402	10 X 10 KH	or work of	and the second	eletion 200
	27 105	viewwale (d)	een erig	100	E2 1087	A		m emilion.	MENNESSE		10777-1066		Mary College	1000	A PROPERTY.
25.550	margett.	NAME OF BELLEVIOLES		erné GA	hornal	CHINDS: NO	STATE STATE	received.	river.	TRANSPORTED TO	See as Add	ENNINE I	deposition of the	HERMAN SECTION	deposits 197
	WHITE STATE	A STATE OF	Married St.		remail.	ALCOHOLD STATE	Control (SPC)	NUMBER OF STREET	offernamics.	ACCOUNTS NO	(merce)	0235250	P-1800	\$10000 (SSA)	Perental ST

Total Time: 51:22

All compositions copyright GrimTim Music (ASCAP)

