

Derek Piotr – Making and Then Unmaking

written by [Beach Sloth](#) March 22, 2021



Derek Piotr's most personal statement yet, "Making and Then Unmaking" at first glance appears to be a radical departure for the young composer, yet upon closer inspection, proves to be the most intimate look at his heart. For throughout his entire varied career and output, his voice has rested at the center of the sound. Here he simply strips away all the distance that digital can bring for a sound that has an honesty to it all. The usage of traditional folk songs and his exploration of their roots feels absolutely eternal.

He has always called the countryside his home, so in a way the pastoral reflections that these songs exude appear to be have studiously examined. The countryside has surrounded him for literal decades, so in a way these serve as a rawer approach to the sound he has been exploring for years. A lot of these instruments certainly are not things normally attributed to Derek, for certain the usage of a banjo for his sound comes as a bit of a shock. While these are certainly stripped-down approaches, he continues to have a careful ear for arrangements that extend into a more analogue setting.

Upon listening to this, one gets the sense of purpose fulfilled. That is not to diminish his past work but rather serve as yet another reminder of the soulfulness of what John Fahey coined "American Primitive". Mysterious despite their seeming simplicity, there is a tenderness to each and every tone. Nor does he fully abandon his past sounds, as the bagpipes do offer a nod, ever so subtle, to his past drone-influenced works. Only this time he has taken away the processing to delve into the natural Zen of these instruments.

Vashti Bunyan's surreal tact introduces the album on a high note with the poetry of "From Your Window" as the tale has an ancient yet simultaneously modern cadence. Guitar work has a pristine polished quality to it with the nimble "Sandhill Command". A laid-back beauty takes shape on the mellowed "Invisible Map", as the strings prove to be a deft touch. Perhaps the barest of the tracks comes from the energetic of "Bolakins". By far the highlight comes from the pastoral rural psychedelic folk of "The Stake/De'il in the Kitchen". Melody here feels drenched in a forestry sunlight, with small rays of light bursting through the canopy.

Impossible to pigeonhole, "The Creek" has a dexterity to it, with a sorrowful ode. Compared to the beats of his previous works "Snow in Paradise" features a living, breathing quality, complete with some wonderful slide guitar and saxophone. Delicate gestures cascade downwards on the rather regal "The River". Perfectly embodying all that came before it is the passion of "Light-Years".

"Making and Then Unmaking" shows off Derek Piotr's undeniable tenderness for these are songs that are love.