

Boomkat Product Review:

A brilliant, bizarre album that plays like an audio illusion, modern and archaic all at once. Experimental folk music that's between the archival anthologies of Death is Not the End and modern electroacoustic sounds.

Derek Piotr reinterprets old time folk music on "The Devil Knows How", building on the ideas he explored on 2021's "Making and Then Unmaking". This time he deconstructs the music's texture more holistically, attempting to mimic long-gone recording methods and field recordings to recreate the physical aesthetic of vintage folk music as well as the composition. Again, he works alongside his friend Scott Solter, who assists him with the "black-magicked tape and wire recording techniques" to give the album a sound that shunts it outside of the timeline, and again he's guided by the work of North Carolina's Lena Bare Turbyfill, a folk singer whose work has been collected and documented on the Death is Not the End label.

There are only two original pieces on the album, 'Yes, They All Sing' which centers Lena Bare Turbyfill's speaking voice, and 'They'd Sing Old Songs, and They'd Sing the New Ones' that does the same with Lena's daughter Nicola 'Aunt Nicky' Pritchard. The rest of the tracks are crackly assemblages of pedal steel guitar and characteristic vocals that sit between field recording and musique concrète project. To bring the sounds up to a contemporary standard, Piotr enlisted Stephan Mathieu who treated them like they were historical recordings, restoring the sounds while retaining their all-important flutter. It's a unique project and inviting set of sounds that allows us to reconsider our feelings on archival folk music and folk revivalism - Piotr's sleight of hand comes from his depth of experience with the subject matter, and his closeness with Lena Bare Turbyfill's family, and that offers the project an emotional weight that's hard to ignore.