

DEREK PIOTR

MAKING - AND THEN - UNMAKING

1. From Your Window
2. Sandhill Command
3. Invisible Map
4. Bolakins
5. The Stake/De'il in the Kitchen
6. The Creek
7. Snow in Paradise
8. The River
9. Light-Years

Written, sung, composed, produced and edited by Derek Piotr, except where noted.

Mixed by Derek Piotr, Scott Solter, and Lasse Marhaug.

Additional vocal treatment: Stephan Mathieu ("Bolakins", "The Stake"), Nicolas Vernhes ("The River").

Mastered by Rashad Becker at Clunk. Track 4 master recording edited by Derek Piotr.

Cover photography by Alex Weber. Post: John Keon.

„Appalachian Loki” character concept by Derek Piotr.

Poncho by Mostly Heard Rarely Seen.

Blouse by Equipment.

Scarf by J. McLaughlin.

Logo design by Derek Piotr.

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Contact: press@derekpiotr.com



Dulcimer, pedal steel guitar, clavichord and banjo are not instruments that one normally associates with a new project from Derek Piotr, but his new album, *Making and Then Unmaking*, opens an entirely new chapter in his oeuvre. Coming out of 2019's *Avia*, Piotr's deeply personal celebration of his grandmother's life, the artist found his interest in digital instrumentation waning and began to immerse himself instead in his long-held passion for folk music.

Diving into the Library Of Congress' archives, with a particular interest in the songs of Lena Turbyfill, Piotr's research focused on US interpretations of traditional folk music from the north of the UK (especially Scotland and Northumberland), most notably the Scottish murder ballad 'Lamkin'. His investigation deepening, Piotr read widely around this and other songs and interviewed members of Turbyfill's family, recording their renditions of these pieces. From there, he began to formulate his own contemporary takes on this musical tradition.

This research has culminated in perhaps Piotr's most musically ambitious and emotionally raw project to date. The composer's voice is foregrounded throughout, operating in a different register to that of the more recognisable singing voice used on previous albums, and the historicity within each song's lyrics and storytelling are central to their conception. There is a wide variety of acoustic instrumentation woven into the record, comprising instruments both native to western folk (acoustic guitar, pedal steel guitar, banjo) and more foreign to the genre (clavinet, saxophone, keyboards), and these formulate an often dense – but always carefully rendered – sonic palette.

Piotr wrote, produced and edited the entire album, co-mixing many of the tracks with the brilliant Scott Solter (*The Mountain Goats*, *Spoon*), and one with Nicolas Vernhes (*Animal Collective*, *Dirty Projectors*), orchestrating nine intricate compositions that are equally complex and delicate. There are connections, mysteries and lyrical echoes throughout the album, both intentional and coincidental, with layers of research and poetic resonance threaded through each composition. Stories, experiences and histories – both personal and universal – are evoked and reshaped in the context of the record.

Derek Piotr has steeped *Making and Then Unmaking* in a variety of communal global musical traditions, but his lovingly detailed research, extensive song-writing process and deeply personal evocations have allowed him to produce nine beautifully fresh and contemporary sounding compositions: a musical history, made and unmade.