

NEW NOISE

Track Premiere: Derek Piotr – ‘The Stake/De’il in the Kitchen’

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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*, out May 14 through DPSR (US) and Bit-Phalanx (UK), opens an entirely new chapter in his oeuvre.

New Noise are proud to premiere Piotr's latest single, "The Stake/De'il in the Kitchen," below:

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.

At the centre are its most intertextual moments: "Bolakins" and "The Stake/De'il In The Kitchen." Piotr's extensive research into and deep admiration for the balladic folk music of Scotland and Northumberland is borne out most explicitly in these performances.

“Bolakins” is a variation on “Lamkin,” with the artist’s determination to pay tribute to Lena Turbyfill’s rendition being further emboldened by the revelation that long-time colleague Shirley Collins had recorded her version (“Cruel Lincoln”) after coming across it on a BBC compilation. These singers’ moving deliveries of this traditional Scottish murder ballad—whose history is one tied up in a variety of myths, legends, and rumours—inspired Piotr’s uniquely North Carolinian take.

“The Stake/De’il In The Kitchen” is another study in selfhood, juxtaposing Lance Martin’s banjo (that well-worn staple of stripped-back US folk) with a playfully futuristic lyric about cyborgs and artificial intelligence. The coda interpolates the strathspey “De’il In The Kitchen,” here slowed to 88 BPM and performed by Jesse Ofgang (border bagpipes).

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.

We caught up with the band and asked them a few questions.

What was the writing and recording process like for this album?

Basically I walked around and sang or typed notes into my iPhone for lyrical structure. The melodic content involved deep immersion listening of both country-western and Appalachian ballad compilations, and my melodies were written based off that.

What was special about the production process for this record?

I was able to go pretty far into what I do as far as players were concerned; I received a lot of financial support from various covid programs and I could go all the way mixing and producing this record with longtime friend Scott Solter, as well as million and one players, banjo, bagpipe, clavichord, you name it, as well as AnCo’s engineer Nic Vernhes. I also think I tackled personal themes the most directly and honestly out of perhaps any of my albums.

What are some of the lyrical themes of the album?

Most of the album deals with personal or societal change, mostly loss.

Do you have any tour, show, or livestream plans?

I am hoping to tour as soon as COVID restrictions fully lift. It was extremely frustrating for me not to tour last year at all, but I have participated in some private zoom performances to keep sane. I am not interested in performing publicly as a livestream.

Any other projects you’d like to plug, or plans for a future album?

I am currently working on some ballad compilations for various projects, some archival material, and some freshly recorded. I also recently recorded a new single for *Making and Then Unmaking*.

Preorder *Making and Then Unmaking* [here](#).