



CHRISTOPHER TRAPANI/ LARRY POLANSKY American Lament

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SUB ROSA

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Territory

NORTH AMERICAN EXCLUSIVE

Genre

FILE UNDER - T - ROCK



DESCRIPTION

With "Folksong Distortions," **Tom Pauwels** and **Liesa Van der Aa** create a journey of lament through the soul of times gone by. Their radical renditions of works by **Larry Polansky** and **Christopher Trapani** do not distort the more upbeat rhythm and tradition of folk songs, but rather reveal and highlight the essence of hard lives, imposed choices – choices that were illusions in the first place – and the difficult times and conditions they have always depicted. Christopher Trapani arranged two classics from the U.S. South, reimagining folk songs with microtones, improvisation, and electronic effects. The work, developed in collaboration with Tom Pauwels and Liesa Van der Aa, was originally made and featured on **ICTUS'** *American Lament* program. The duo was given considerable room for improvisation and interpretation in the process. The first song, "Wayfaring Stranger," is a well-known folk/gospel melody in A minor. The lyrics contrast an aimless journey through a harsh, hostile world, with the Christian promise of heaven as a "home" and reunion with lost loved ones. The second song, "Freight Train," was written by **Elizabeth Cotten**, a left-handed guitarist who held her guitar upside down, resulting in a very recognizable strumming style. "Sweet Betsy from Pike" and "Eskimo Lullaby" are taken from Larry Polansky's 2005 *Songs and Toads*, a five-section piece that consists of three settings of American folk songs and two computer-composed pieces. The work was originally written for guitar, more specifically for the national steel guitar, refretted in a specific intonation designed by **Lou Harrison**. Each piece explores a different guitar tuning. A significant intervention to the original work is made to accommodate Liesa Van der Aa's violin with effect pedals, opening to an epic re-reading of the work as conceived by the American composer Larry Polansky. What this set-up enables is a melancholy, slow-paced approach that quite radically opposes the more upbeat and joyful nature of the folk songs.

TRACKLISTING

01. Two Folksong Distortions: Wayfaring Stranger/Freight Train (**Christopher Trapani**)
02. Sweet Betsy from Pike (**Larry Polansky**)
03. Eskimo Lullaby (**Ruth Fulton Fowke** and **Richard Johnston**)

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Tom Pauwels** and **Liesa Van der Aa** perform radical renditions of works by **Larry Polansky** and **Christopher Trapani**.
- The work, developed in collaboration with Tom Pauwels and Liesa Van der Aa, was originally made and featured on **ICTUS'** *American Lament* program.
- The work was originally written for guitar, more specifically for the national steel guitar, refretted in a specific intonation designed by **Lou Harrison**. Each piece explores a different guitar tuning.

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