

is not static, but rather shifts through different registers in thoughtful expressions. Entitled “Impasse,” the second movement is based on a twelve-tone row. Its opening material returns in the last section, which gives a sense of direction and place to the dissonant pointillist gestures. The third prelude, “Eclipse,” carries a more lyrical and introspective quality in its opening. Its second section charges through a contrasting embattled dissonant passage before returning to brighter, softer gestures. The *Three Preludes* show a high level of skill in atonal composition and expression.

The final two pieces, *Meditations* (2006) and *Sunderdance* (2008), convey distinct personal and artistic voices. The *Meditations* are short, intimate pieces constructed on the nineteenth-century idea of *moments musicaux*, with each movement title recalling a personal event or time with someone in the composer’s life. As Sherkin shares in the liner notes, *Sunderdance* found its inspiration in a passage from Virginia Woolf’s *A Room of One’s Own* (1929): “the beauty of the world . . . has two edges, one of laughter, one of anguish, cutting the heart asunder.” The two “edges” form two musical characters in Sherkin’s work, one high-pitched and brightly melodic and the other darker and more turbulent with loud, dissonant chordal patterns. In three parts, the piece allows these characters to combine and interact in numerous ways, conveying the idea that they are two parts of the same whole. In *Sunderdance*, as with all the works on this compelling, expertly performed debut CD, *Sherkin* gives the listener something to apprehend, enjoy and contemplate.

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Guy Klucevsek, *Polka from the Fringe*. Starkland ST-218, 2012, 2 CDs.

Accordionist Guy Klucevsek and his producers must have sensed that two CDs of “polkas, pseudo-polkas, and decimated polkas” might warrant explanation—and a good dose of humor. The liner notes explain how, back in the 1970s and 1980s, Klucevsek invited his colleagues to unite under a “Polka freak-flag,” commissioning a variety of composers to write boundary-stretching polkas for the accordion.¹ The resulting twenty-nine track album—compiled from recordings originally released in the 1980s and 1990s—is infused with Klucevsek’s prankster spirit and sense of irony, elevating the popular genre to the level of art while deflating the pretense of art music traditions.

Klucsevsek’s training helps explain the album’s contradictory impulses. He studied classical accordion from his teens and received formal training in composition during college, but the latter experience especially left him frustrated by the

¹ All quotes in this review are taken from the liner notes of *Polka from the Fringe*, by Elliott Sharp and Guy Klucsevsek.

instrument's marginalization in the world of "serious" music. As he explains, "Getting the accordion (and myself) taken seriously. . . meant avoiding music that reinforced accordion stereotypes." He put the polka down and favored instead solo accordion works, such as Virgil Thomson's *Lament* and Henry Cowell's *Perpetual Rhythm*. But Klucevsek eventually rediscovered the polka, at which point he pursued not its standard traditions, but its "fringe": something outside the mainstream that would challenge audiences' expectations for the instrument, and which might convince them that polka could be Art.

Klucsevsek's claims to American folk traditions also help explain the album's polka-as-Art concept. The composer describes himself and the polka as rooted in the American landscape and working class, explaining that his upbringing in a "Slovenian-American family in western Pennsylvania's coal-mining country in the 1950s" meant that he was immersed in polka from his early years. Klucsevsek uses his and the polka's folk origins to make a politically charged turn in positioning the album: as emphasized three times in the liner notes, the composer imagined his work in part as a response to Charles Mingus's dismissive quip, "Let the white man develop the polka." Klucsevsek's reasoning reflects his own personal sense of humor and moment in political history, but also situates the polka as an answer to American jazz traditions. Polkas, and especially forward-looking ones like those of *Polka from the Fringe*, have the potential to become another American, folk-derived art form according to this reasoning.

In keeping with Klucsevsek's envelope-pushing aims, few of the album's tracks actually contain the straightforward oom-pahs of traditional polkas. Instead, most follow the invocation of the collection's opening track to "add a little rhythm/Spice up that thing" and might best be described as, in Klucsevsek's words, "avant-garde two-steps." Three in particular stand out among the collection. Composer Bobby Previte contrasts an improvisatory, fiddle-filled introduction with layers of catchy, rock-inspired ostinatos in his "Nova Scotia Polka." Klucsevsek's own "Some of that 'Old Time Soul' Polka" is performed with contagious enthusiasm (and maybe even reckless abandon). An unsettling tension between lyrics and music beguiles listeners in Dick Connette's "Wild Goose;" the song's text describes the pulling of teeth and mosquitoes' mutilation of a sweetheart's body, but the music is exceptionally sweet, melodic, and lulling. Other tracks risk gimmick when they focus on particularly ironic juxtapositions, like Mary Ellen Child's "Oa Poa Polka," a pointillistic take on the genre; Daniel Goode's "Diet Polka," a minimalist work; and Rolf Groesbeck's "Polka I," which might be best described as expressionist. Still others offer little beyond embracing the nonsensical, like David Garland's "VCR Polka" or Lois V Virek's "Attack Cat Polka"—a song narrated by a feline antagonist.

The eclecticism of *Polka from the Fringe* combined with its make-no-apologies approach—manifested in a great deal of deliberately cultivated noise and dissonance—does not lend itself to easy listening. As with most avant-garde works, the album does not necessarily aim to please or sell (either commercially or specifically to a scholarly audience), but rather to provoke. Its success, then, lies primarily in audiences' persuasion by the concept: not only that it is possible to move outside of polka traditions to a fringe, or that doing so is a worthwhile cause, but that removing the polka from its folk origins is the answer to making the genre artistic.

Listeners are left with an array of evidence to consider in this pursuit. On one hand, a move to make the polka relevant at all is somewhat undermined by the circumstances of the album's production—released now more than thirty years after the songs' original assemblage. On another, Klucevsek's eclecticism invites audiences to engage with a variety of timelessly reinvented, and maybe even art-worthy, dichotomies, including "black" and "white," "high" and "low," and "center" and "margins." Regardless of whether these dichotomies or the album's avant-garde sounds are successful in making the polka art, Klucevsek does manage to pose the question, "what would happen if people took the polka a little more seriously?" The irony of Klucevsek's answers, if not the avant-garde sounds themselves, has the potential to charm listeners.

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Star Trek: The Original Series Soundtrack Collection. La-La Land Records, LLLCD-1701, 2012, 15 CDs.

Preserving some of the most iconic music in science fiction television, *Star Trek: The Original Series Soundtrack Collection* includes more than six hundred music cues and sound effects, painstakingly remastered from the original 1/4-inch monaural reels and presented in a sumptuous fifteen-CD box set with full-color illustrated liner notes. Producers Lukas Kendall, Neil S. Bulk, and Jeff Bond have made available a cache of recordings long hidden from the public, providing the original versions of the music cues as composed, conducted, and recorded by the series' composers, without the post-production changes as the cues were cut and placed into the final televised product.¹ The collection is therefore useful for analyzing post-production soundtrack decisions, and for providing an aural image of music not otherwise preserved in score form.²

This release is not the first attempt to make the series' music library available to the public. GNP Crescendo Records released one volume of *Star Trek* cues in 1985

¹ Lukas Kendall indicated that they "used 1/4-inch mono tapes of the scores as they were recorded on the scoring stage [Stage F of Glen Glenn Sound, Hollywood], with the bad takes and false starts, before they were cut up and dubbed into the shows themselves. The aforementioned mono tapes were transferred to digital and then they were mastered to notch out 60hz hum, take out undue amounts of hiss, etc." The tapes were also pitch-corrected and mastered for optimum performance on home audio systems. Lukas Kendall, e-mail correspondence, 24 March 2013. I would like to thank Lukas Kendall and Jeff Bond for sharing their research materials with me.

² Composer copies of *Star Trek* draft and conducting scores can be found at the L. Tom Perry Special Collections Library at Brigham Young University; the Sibley Music Library at the Eastman School of Music; the Cinematic Arts Library at the University of Southern California; and the American Heritage Center at the University of Wyoming.