

La Folia

Online Music Review – February 2003

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Grant Chu Covell

***Deep Night, Deep Autumn.* Roger KLEIER: *We Speak of Deep Night* (1998); *The Juan Cortina Suite* (1998); *Brickyard* (1998); *Lodi* (1996); *Chambers Street* (1998); *Woodside Meteor* (1998); *We Speak of Deep Autumn* (1998). Roger Kleier (guitars, electronics), Annie Gosfield (keyboards). Starkland ST-211 (<http://www.starkland.com/>). Also <http://music.calarts.edu/~schlagen/>.**

Roger Kleier knows his way around the guitar, and certainly around the electronic music studio. Kleier's starting point for this disc is definitely an instrument with strings, but with Annie Gosfield on keyboards (mostly synthesizers) and much post-processing, the final product is tough to characterize as guitar.

Woodside Meteor, the eighth track on the disc, most elegantly represents what Kleier can do. A straightforward layer of looped guitar sounds in 5 / 4 time – sounding almost African in rhythm and mode – is banished under some fleeting distortions of itself alternately mimicking the tweety sound of 1950's computer music and the rubbing of a balloon. There's also gentle solo-line that sounds Hawaiian. This description doesn't do Kleier justice, except to indicate a lively palette, varied influences, and a good set of ears.

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Other tracks unfold like grand pageants, such as *We Speak of Deep Night*, which connects several disparate styles of guitar playing, processed electronic textures, and backgrounds. The three-movement *Juan Cortina Suite* is a bracing look at a charged moment of Mexican-American history and it too blends a variety of moods and colors.

I played the tiny one-minute track, *Brickyard*, several times immediately on first hearing to savor its enveloping spectrum of modulated and slowed-down guitar sounds. Something about it reminded me of the oddest of David Lynch's movies. It may just be a simple guitar riff that's been brought to its knees and ring-modulated, but it's quite a neat minute.

Starkland has a small but high-quality catalog. I recommend ST-206 with music by Charles Amirkhanian who does things with words and texts that no one else does, and also ST-202 with classic electronic music by Tod Dockstader. Kleier's new disc is in good company.



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