

**fROOTS**

fROOTS Issue 397

14th June 2016

review by Andrew Cronshaw

[www.frootsmag.com](http://www.frootsmag.com)**YURODNY****Haivka** Diatribe DIACD020

This is huge and absolutely glorious. The spirit of a Zappa big band, but with Ukrainian traditional music and in Ireland.

It begins with a short unaccompanied polyphonic song from the traditional vocal trio of Ukrainian guests Iryna Klymenko, Susanna Karpenko and Olesya Zdorovetska. Then into a mighty surging, churning dronal sound over which Oleg Ponomarev's fiddle wails and skitters between traditional dance melody and hysterical squee, under which the strings, sax, trombone, keys, double bass and drums of the nine-piece core band move into a chugging asymmetric rhythm, breaking apart into wild chaos, darkening into a Mephistophelian whirl of ominous blocks of electronics and brass, through which again emerges the dance tune before it has to duel again with the chaos. So that's the nine-and-a-half minute second track, composed by violinist Cora Venus Lunny.

The rest of the tracks are more than my thesaurus can come up with enough adjectives to describe. It's wild, it's big, it's constantly changing, Ukrainian passion, loss and agony, intense, massively vivid, moving wonderfulness. The vocal trio returns with more short punctuating fragments of traditional unaccompanied song and also solos with the band; in *Drevo* (Tree) Olesya Zdorovetska takes heart-rending, lamenting vocals surrounded by a disturbing slither and sob of strings.

The band's name in Ukrainian means 'holy fool'. Its members all deserve a name-check: as well as the aforementioned Lunny and Ponomarev, there's Adrian Hart (violin, electronics), Kate Ellis (cello), Nick Roth (saxes, electronics), Colm O'Hara (trombone), Francesco Turrisi (piano, accordeon, keyboards, percussion). Dave Redmond (double bass) and Phil Macmullan (drums).

Guest composer electronicist Alla Zagaykevych is responsible for the magical three-part, 23-minute album closer, which in its mountain-song-evoking soundscape of overlapping vocals reminds me very much of the great work with traditional sound and composition of Svetozar Stračina in Ukraine's neighbouring Slovakia.

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