



Folk-Rock

Work of Art *Lift*
Soundkeeper SR1001

OK, HOW MANY times have you wished you could hear some fresh new “old-fashioned” folk/rock acoustic music recorded the way audiophiles love their sound: unadulterated, with no overdubbing, no compression, and absolutely no tricks-up-the-sleeve gimmicks? I imagine that one secret to successfully capturing this alluring sound is to use only a pair of strategically placed microphones in the recording area. It is commonly held that modern multi-miking, multi-channel

recording techniques have resulted in sonic confusions, recordings that aren’t really “in” any space. Recording engineers have come to rely on these “accepted” procedures and have, in many instances, inadvertently obscured recording’s true or original purpose, to produce a sound that is as close to “being there” as possible. Fortunately, for the hopeful aficionado of both good music and sound, our prayers have been answered.

A wonderful new project has been released by Soundkeeper Recordings that will immediately satisfy those purist longings. New York City’s Art Halperin and his band Work of Art have released an acoustic masterpiece entitled, *Lift*. Work of Art consists of Art Halperin (lead vocals, guitar and harmonica), Al Maddy (harmony vocals, banjo,

guitar), Jon Rosenblatt (harmony vocals, mandolin, percussion), Carver Blanchard (lute, guitar), Sue Williams (bass), and Nat Seeley (drums, percussion.) Lead singer Art Halperin competently and compassionately wrote the lyrics and music for all 10 songs. When you listen to Halperin on this recording, your mind will quickly think of Bob Dylan. Both the vocals and the writing are uncannily similar to the work of that super icon.

You will also wonder what it would have been like if all of the early folk artists could have had the same opportunity to be recorded with such accuracy. What a delicious thought. Adding to the acoustic excitement is the fact that these recordings were made during two sessions at the St. John’s Episcopal Church in Elka Park, New

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York. It is immediately obvious that this location was an ideal recording environment.

Halperin has also written and recorded, with his band, several national and international albums, as well as television and radio commercials. Their music was also featured in the movie "Baby It's You." As a soloist, he has performed on stage with guitar great Eric Clapton, Marty Stuart, Bonnie Raitt, Robbie Robertson (of The Band), The Temptations, David Grisman, and

Soundkeeper Recordings to satisfy his lifelong passion to release the absolute best stereo recordings possible. A long list of famous artists that he has helped to record, or done himself, is listed on his web site, barrydiamentaudio.com. Some of the artists included Bob Marley, Emerson Lake and Palmer, Aerosmith, Enya, Simply Red, Anita Baker, Jackson Browne, The Coasters, Phil Collins, Jim Croce, Eagles, Rascals ... the list is practically endless. You will be

CD-R (SR2001) for the best of 16/44 for \$20, and a 24/96 high-resolution version on DVD-R (SR4001) for \$30.

To summarize the merits of this CD: The material is freshly imaginative and simmered in talent; the sound is spacious and superbly mastered. The only criticism I have is a minor one, a few off-pitch notes in some of the harmony vocals. I am sure that the small pitch inconsistencies just come with the territory when no overdubbing (or safety net)

***Lift* is a great first CD from Soundkeeper Recordings, who bring us a new and wonderful bluegrass group, Work of Art. Even better, there is also a stunning hi-rez version on a 24/96 DVD-R!**

North Carolina's folk/bluegrass legend, Doc Watson. These associations alone shout as to the heavy-gauge caliber of this artist. Interestingly, he was the last artist the late John Hammond, Sr. signed to a contract.

Lift is actually the first recording from Soundkeeper Recordings. At the helm of this new label is former Atlantic Records engineer Barry Diament. He decided to form

impressed. The site also lists the many record labels where Diament has worked. It, too, is lengthy and distinguished. In addition to his previous highly successful studio work, he has expressed his musical expertise in several articles published in other high-end electronic equipment magazines.

Soundkeeper offers a high-quality CD (SR1001, the version I received) pressing of *Lift* for \$15, a

is used. What you hear is what you get, but then again, isn't that what we are ultimately striving to achieve?

The liner notes say, "The goal of every Soundkeeper Recording is to bring the listener to the performance, to create the feeling the listener is in the presence of the musicians, in the space where the performance actually took place." Mission supremely accomplished!



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