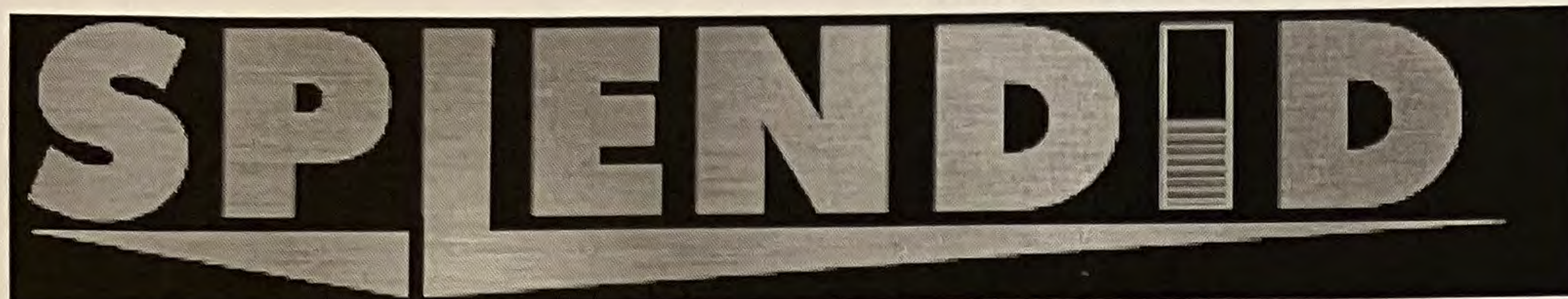




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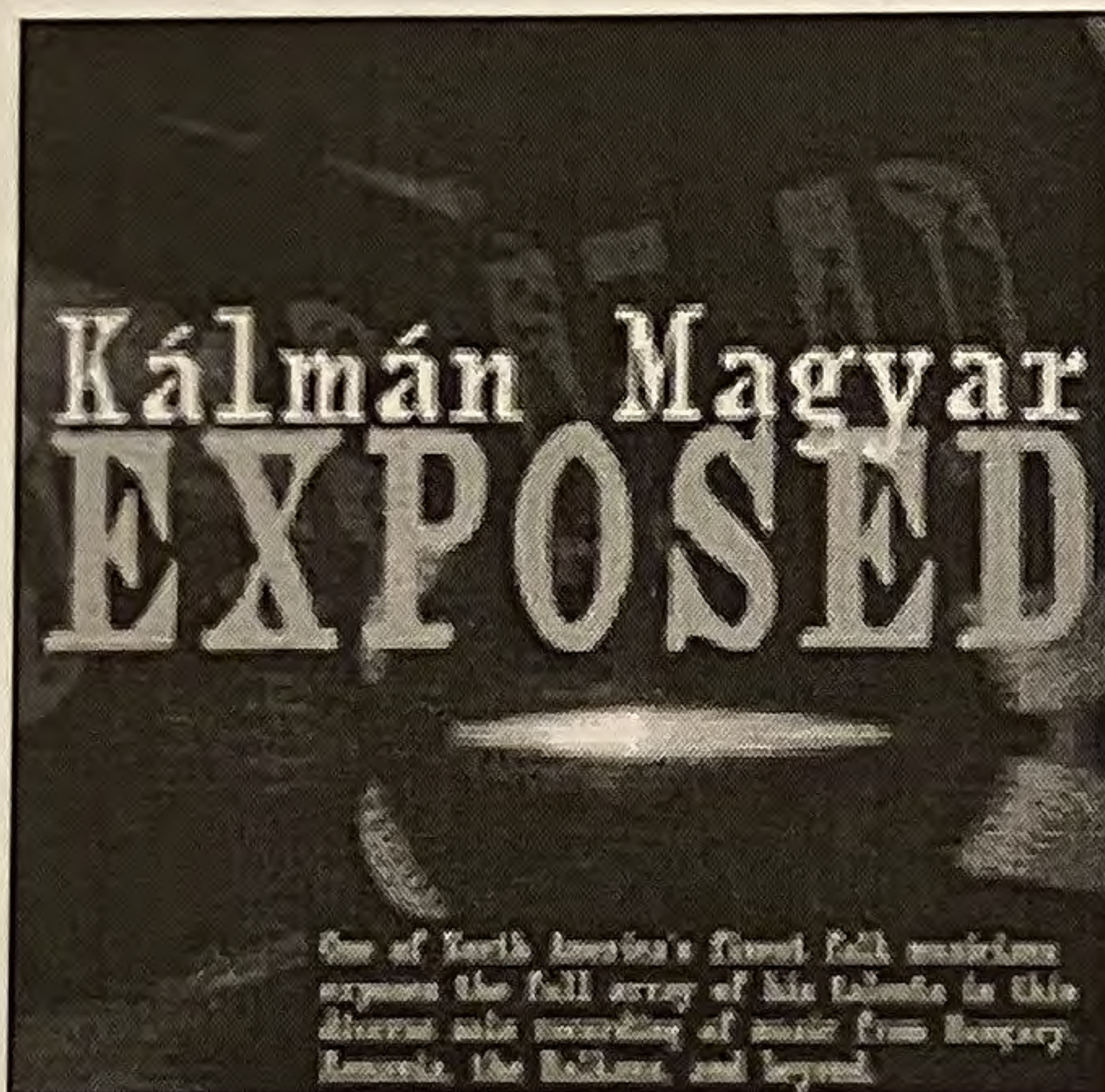
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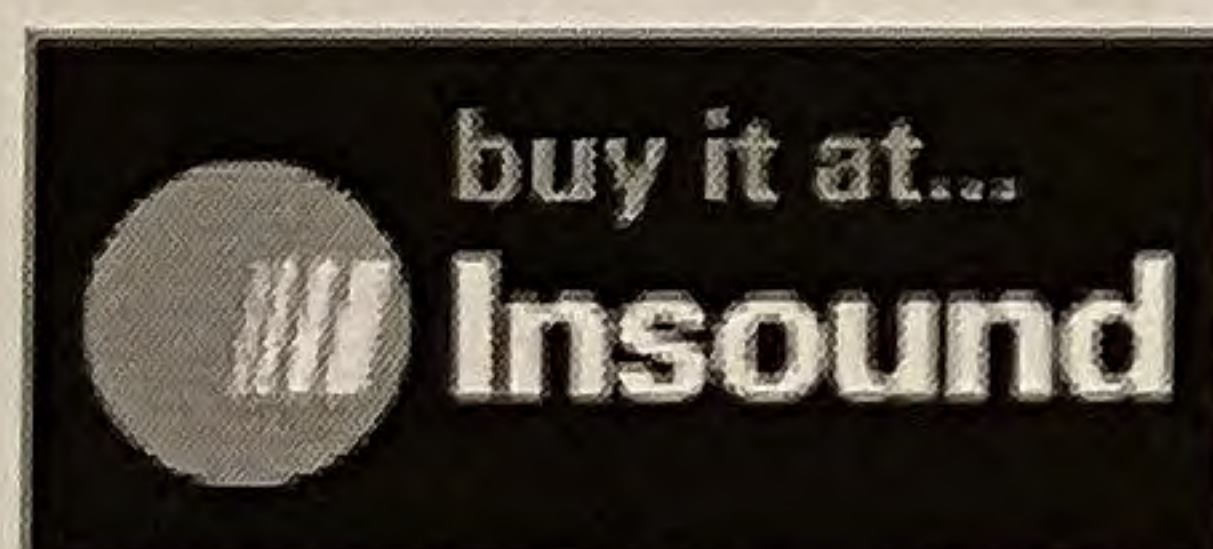
Multi-instrumentalist Kalman Magyar was part of the duo that made *Crossing Paths* such an engaging fusion of jazz and European folk music. Magyar focuses on his violin and viola playing on *Exposed*, arranging more folk material from Central and Eastern Europe. An overdubbed one-man band, he also plays all of the rest of the instruments on this album -- cellos, guitars, basses, keyboards, mouth harp, kontra, dumbek, percussion and accordion.



Kalman Magyar  
Exposed  
Hungaria

Format Reviewed: CD

Soundclip: "Exposed"



"Exposed" uses a Romanian folk tune taught to Magyar by violinist Dorel Zamfir. A florid violin solo is set against layers of strings and a thrumming accordion part. The background retains the directness of folk music, but this is ably countered by the shimmering virtuosity of the foreground fiddling. "Padjusko" is a boisterous Bulgarian dance an unusual meter -- 5/16 time -- which gives the piece an off-kilter sense of phrasing. Even though this is far more complicated than most mainstream dance music, its rhythmic vigor may make you want to cut a rug! "Hit It", a Transylvanian tune that features uto-gardon (percussive cello), falls into similar groove-laden territory. "Trite Pati" presents rhythmically charged arrangements of popular dances from Bulgaria.

"Naked Romanian" is a medley of, you guessed it, Romanian tunes, which Magyar picked from Moldavian violist Anatol Stefanet. There is considerable variance of tempo here; Magyar uses rubato (small flexibilities of rhythm), accelerandi (passages which speed up) and ritardandi (passages which slow down) as expressive effects, a technique that is an integral part of the Gypsy style of violin playing. "The Lark" showcases another Gypsy violin technique -- using the instrument to imitate the calls of birds.

Magyar even interprets a tune from my own ancestral homeland, Ireland, on the lyrical "Lullaby for Trixie". Strummed guitars and keyboard accompany a lovely, plaintive violin melody. He also stretches out a bit on his arrangement of "F# Fantasy", a melancholy tune from the repertoire of Serbian accordionist Ljubisa Pavkovic, playing portamento-filled fiddle melodies over a heavy 2/4 rhythmic ostinato. "Sound the Trumpet" is another delicious curiosity, a Romanian tune on which Magyar employs the trumpet-violin (a stringed instrument modified to sound a bit like a trumpet).

*Exposed* demonstrates Magyar's encyclopedic knowledge of European folk music, as well as his facility on a large number of instruments. Not only is his source material engaging, but the arrangements themselves are entertaining and musically satisfying. The disc not only teaches us something, but is a delight to hear -- what a concept!

-- Christian Carey

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