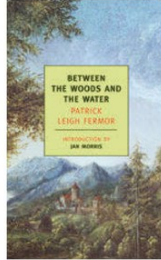


NATHANIEL HANDY

Writer and contributor

🇸🇪 **Isolating in Malmo, Sweden**

Patrick Leigh Fermor –

Between the Woods and the Water

I've been reading Patrick Leigh Fermor's epic trilogy of his 1933-34 walk from the Hook of Holland to Istanbul, in which he depicts a world about to be engulfed by war and revolution. He was only 18 when he set out, and by his own admission no world music aficionado. In the middle book, *Between the Woods and the Water*, he has several encounters with Gypsy and shepherd musicians, some playing instruments he doesn't recognise but describes in detail. His whole trilogy has become renowned as a portrait of a vanished pre-war world, with its mix of vagabond rough-sleeping and aristocratic castles. But perhaps his most poignant observations are of an ancient musical culture – from Romanian shepherds singing the *Mioritza* ballad to flutes made of eagles' wing-bones to all-night picnic Gypsy serenades.

JIM HICKSON

Contributor and blogger

🇬🇧 **Isolating in London, UK**

Grim Fandango



I've been replaying one of my favourite video games, *Grim Fandango*. It's originally from 1998 but was remastered to look and sound all shiny in 2015. That's ancient in terms of video games, but as a work of art, it's not aged a bit. It's an adventure game set in the Mexican Land of the Dead as seen through the lens of film noir and bebop. You play as Manuel Calavera, a low-level grim reaper, as he uncovers a vast conspiracy of organised crime and corruption at every level. The visual style is equal parts Mesoamerican folk art, art deco and golden age Hollywood, and the soundtrack by Peter McConnell is a fantastic mix of huge, late Romantic orchestras, jazz of all sorts, Mexican *sones*, Andean music, tango, surf rock and even Karnatic violin. Along with ingenious puzzles and a sharp wit throughout, it's basically perfect. Deservedly regarded as a classic. *Read Jim Hickson's blog at 365goodalbums.blogspot.com*

CATALINA MARIA JOHNSON

Radio broadcaster and contributor

🇺🇸 **Isolating in Chicago, IL, US**

WWOZ in New Orleans – Guardians of the Groove

Of all the live concert experiences I'm missing in these times, the New Orleans JazzFest may be at the top of my withdrawal symptom list. At the end of April, I would normally have been experiencing the most marvellous music from gospel to jazz to blues to world along with sampling rosemint iced tea, pecan-crusted catfish and many other delicacies. This year, a beautifully memorable live streaming from WWOZ Radio from New Orleans (Jazz Festing in Place) shared selected sets of Jazz Fests past, (some of which are archived here for a limited time) and brought extraordinary musical moments to my ears – including some never heard in 40 years! More significantly, that programming has also taken me to exploring the WWOZ website and blog. The ongoing shows on this classic and aptly termed 'Guardians of the Groove' New Orleans radio station, is a lovingly-curated selection of a lot of magnificent and joyful noise from the most musical of US cities. As I write this, I've savoured music that distils hope and resilience in every note, from the bold, ebullient horn-heavy beats of the Hot 8 Brass Band to the boogie-woogie stomp of Basin Street Six in the 50s. And in the absence of live concerts in the city, it's also been a delight to check out the station's link to the Online Wire, which has an ongoing calendar of daily virtual live performances from New Orleans musicians. *wwoz.org*

DAVID HARRINGTON

Violinist and founding member of Kronos Quartet

🇺🇸 **Isolating in San Francisco, CA, US**

Dr N Rajam



Once a month I find a performance by Indian violinist Dr N Rajam previously unknown to me. Then every day I listen to the same piece. Normally I wouldn't take the time to do this sort of in-depth listening exploration. But now I've discovered how wonderful it is to revisit something new 30 times in a row at roughly the same time every day. What's been happening is that I look forward to hearing N Rajam's singing tone and am able to measure my own gradations of feeling about what is happening to every performer in the world, to every young musician, to the structures and norms we have enjoyed and counted on suddenly absent from us. As I'm writing I'm listening to her performance of 'Raga Malkauns' for the 27th day in a row. There are so many moments to be surprised by – a tapestry of wonders in the fluidity, generosity and ease of her playing. I have so many memories of her playing now embedded in my imagination. The new world awaiting all music lovers will be different than we can now imagine but that music will pull us and magnetize us into the future is a certainty. *violinschool.net and kronosquartet.org*

