

GRAMOPHONE

Garland

The Landscape Scrolls

John Lane *perc*

Starkland © ST229 (50' • DDD)



It was the early 1980s when I dropped in at Lou Harrison's place on the California

coast. I had met him through his work with Ken Goldsmith and Terry King, for whom he had written his Double Concerto with Javanese gamelan.

In fact, a gamelan rehearsal was under way when I arrived, so Lou enlisted me to repeat a seven-note rhythmic sequence on a small gong. Ad infinitum. The first five minutes were entirely enjoyable and the second five became increasingly physically painful, before the third gave way to a pleasing numbness.

Starkland's premiere recording of Peter Garland's wonderful *The Landscape Scrolls* is like that afternoon. There is nothing particularly new about the concept of music that in the listening becomes a joint

meditative enterprise but Garland makes sure that each movement takes its cues for emotion and movement according to the sound universe it will inhabit and his own personal sense of time. Responding to John Lane's request in his commission for a 'concert-length piece', drawing inspiration from the 15th-century painter Sesshū Tōyō, Garland uses one set of monochromatic drums for each of five movements, segmenting the diurnal cycle from midday to early morning.

Overall, the sequence has a rise to sheer joy and fall that justifies its 50-minute length. Individually, the five sound palettes – eight drums (Chinese or Native American), nine rice bowls, three triangles (for the fireflies of early summer), glockenspiel (for Van Gogh's *Starry Night*) and tubular bells – become the meditation which becomes the music.

Garland's notes and an introduction by John Luther Adams add to the enjoyment of the audiophile recording. **Laurence Vittes**