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## Pop/Rock CD Reviews



## Lars Hollmer - Viandra - Cuneiform Records

*The quirky Swedish keyboard and accordion player has penned 16 very eclectic instrumentals with innocent, folk-like and often melancholic moods.*



Published on June 26, 2008



### Lars Hollmer - Viandra - Cuneiform Records Rune 271, 49:48 \*\*\*\*\*:

(Lars Hollmer - all compositions, accordions, keyboards, melodica, percussion, mandolin, mandola, voices, more; Michel Berckmans - bassoons, English horn, oboe, melodica; Santiago Jimenez, violins; Andreas Tengberg, cello; guest artists: Morgan Agren, drums; Coste Aptrea, mandolin; Ulf Wallander, tenor sax; Vocal trio)

This was a pleasant surprise. Most of this label's offerings are simply too avantgarde for my tender ears, but Swedish keyboard and accordion player Hollmer has instantly captured my fancy and I want to hear some of his other 11 solo albums. He started almost 40 years ago with an alternative Swedish rock band. He says the title of this album is derived from *Vi*=We and *Andra*=Others - I gather that's in Swedish, though he doesn't say.

Another reviewer observed that the word eclectic doesn't do Hollmer's music justice, and I couldn't agree more. You'll find world music, folk, jazz, rock, Swedish pop tunes, minimalism, Fellini-esque film music, and Romantic period classical influences. There is also an innocence and simplicity a la The Penguin Cafe music, plus a Zappa-esque sense of humor. The 16 short pieces here were composed over the past six years while Hollmer was working on other projects, including the rock band and an accordion supergroup. They didn't fit into those projects, so he saved them up and *Viandra* was born.

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A number of the tracks sound like they came from film scores, or even constitute miniature soundtracks all by themselves. A one-minute track - *Moldaviska* - was a song in the style of folk music of the Balkans and sung by a girl in a complete film score Hollmer composed. The only track that caused me to hit the advance button was *Snabb (Fast)*, with its stuck-record minimalism. Contributing to the innocent sound of much of the music is the predominant use of simple instruments such as the melodica and mandolin. (The first instrument Hollmer played as a child was the zither.) On second thought, perhaps this CD is unique among Hollmer's recordings and I won't like the others much, because this one is described in a [news release](#) as "the most accessible of his albums."

### **TrackList:**

Viandra 2:50  
Mirror Objects 1:20  
Söb (Seek) 2:09  
Snabb (Fast) 4:20  
Moldaviska 1:09  
Påztema 3:52  
Prozesscirk 4:34  
Merged With Friends 1:47  
Konstig (Strange) 4:41  
Baladeis 2:52  
Strutt (Strut) 1:55  
Lilla Bye (Little Bye) 2:51  
Första 05 (First 05) 3:34  
Alice 4:12  
Överdagö 2:28  
Folkdron Menad 5:25

-- John Henry

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