



Meadow Pastorale celebrates the uplifting spring-time soundscapes of meadows, grasslands, overgrown fields, and associated hedgerows, ponds, and forest edges. You'll hear the songs of meadowlarks, bluebirds, sparrows, bobolinks, blackbirds, bobwhites, and more ... angelic avian musicians that give voice to pastoral landscapes throughout North America.

9 Tracks, 78 minutes (*play softly for soothing effect*)

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1. Tallgrass Choir (12:00)

Witness the amazing profusion of sound coming from a tallgrass prairie preserve at dawn. Listen for the songs of Eastern Meadowlark, Northern Bobwhite, Dickcissel, Red-winged Blackbird, and Field Sparrow. A very distant Great Horned Owl hoots at times. 5:45am, 9 May 2010. Bradford Research Farm near Columbia, Missouri. © Lang Elliott.

2. Bluebird Bramble (5:40)

At the edge of a meadow in the rolling hills of southeastern Ohio, an Eastern Bluebird greets the dawn with bright, musical phrases. A Common Yellowthroat also sings loudly and a Spring Field Cricket soon begins chirping from the grass. In the background, listen for the songs of Northern Cardinal, Eastern Towhee, Black-and-white Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat, and other species. 5:00am, 31 May 2000. Near Marietta, Ohio. © Lang Elliott.

3. Mountain Meadow (9:10)

A lovely and magical dawn chorus from a large pasture in the hills of West Virginia. Spring Field Crickets chirp and several Grasshopper Sparrows give their insect-like *tip-tup-zeeeeee* songs from tall grass. Listen also for the sustained musical trills of American Toads, singing from a meadow pond (the *gunks* of Green Frogs can barely be heard). Additional bird sounds include Tufted Titmouse, Canada Goose, American Crow, and even a Red-eyed Vireo (singing from a large tree). 5:15am, 23 May 2010. Berkeley County, West Virginia. © Wil Hershberger..

4. Grassland Concerto (6:20)

A sparkling dawn chorus recorded in a lush patch of tallgrass prairie. Henslow's Sparrows sound off throughout, their tinkling, insect-like *sedelick* dominating the high end. Listen also for Northern Cardinal, Field Sparrow, Yellow-breasted Chat, and Dickcissel. A Mourning Dove sings from a distant tree and a Southern Leopard Frog occasionally chuckles from a marshy area. 5:00am, 12 May 2005. Taberville Prairie near Rockville, Missouri. © Lang Elliott.

5. Bobolink Choristers (8:30)

There is nothing quite like a meadow full of Bobolinks, their bubbling, gurgling song likened to "a mad, wreckless, song-fantasia ... an outburst of pentup, irrepressible glee." This soundscape is full of Bobolink choristers, and also features the songs of Red-winged Blackbirds, Song Sparrows, Field Sparrows, and Savannah Sparrows. Woodpeckers drum in the distance ... listen for Pileated Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. What a lively chorus this is, a natural alarm clock that is sure to get you moving at the break of day! 5:30am, 11 May 2009. Near Trumansburg, New York. © Lang Elliott.

6. Pasture Pond (8:10)

It is late April and the Red-winged Blackbirds are back, busily setting up their territories among thick cattails growing at the edge of a small pond in a grassy meadow. The males sing their jubilant *conk-la-rees* and both sexes give dry *chack* calls. Listen for the distant drums of both Yellow-bellied Sapsucker and Pileated Woodpecker, the whistled songs of Field Sparrow, the trills of Swamp Sparrow, plus the occasional songs and calls of Song Sparrow, Spring Peeper, and Blue Jay. 5:30am, 30 April 2009. A meadow pond near Trumansburg, New York. © Lang Elliott.

7. Meadowlarks at Dawn (6:00)

This recording is an excited celebration of the Eastern Meadowlark. In the Wichita Mountains of southeastern Oklahoma, my friend Ted came across a meadow full of these whistlers, and their plaintive down-slurred songs and liquid chatters dominate the soundscape. Mourning Doves provide a low end for the chorus, and a number of other species sound off, including: Grasshopper Sparrow, American Crow, Wild Turkey, Red-bellied Woodpecker, and Northern Cardinal. 7:00am, 21 April 1994. Wichita Mountains near Lawton, Oklahoma. © Ted Mack.

8. Sandpiper Skysong (10:00)

Recorded in the Nature Conservancy's Tallgrass Prairie Preserve in northeastern Oklahoma, this busy chorus is loaded to the brim with Dickcissels, so many as to produce a constant din composed of their staccato metallic notes: *dik-dik-dik-ciss-ciss!* Eastern Meadowlarks also whistle and Northern Bobwhites give *hoy-pei* calls. But the real jewel is the musical flight song of the Upland Sandpiper, a rising vibrato ending with beautiful slurred whistles. Such an enlivening soundprint of the tallgrass prairie biome! 5:00am, 14 May, 2005. Tallgrass Prairie Preserve near Pawhuska, Oklahoma. © Ted Mack

9. Meadow Symphony (12:00)

We will end with a wonderful dawn chorus from an overgrown meadow and forest edge in upstate New York. Mourning Doves provide a mellow bass accompaniment, while the sweet, quickening trills of Field Sparrows stand out and inform us of abundant tall grasses and scattered shrubs. Many other birds join in the chorus, some difficult to discern in the busy mix. Listen for American Crow, American Robin, Common Yellowthroat, and Song Sparrow. I consider this chorus symbolic of meadows everywhere, so utterly full of life and voicing bright twitterings that lift our spirits and aim us upward toward the heavens. 2 June 2010. Near Brooktondale, New York. © Lang Elliott.



Notes by Lang Elliott: Humans love to look out upon open areas flush with tall grasses, interrupted here and there by hedgerows and forest patches. Our pastoral landscapes are inherently restful and their natural soundscapes are but extensions of their “open” and “expansive” theme. As a recordist, I noticed early-on that birds of meadows and prairies mostly sing in the higher range. Some are quite musical (eg. Eastern Meadowlarks), while others masquerade as insects, at least in terms of their buzzing or chirping high-pitched songs (eg. Grasshopper Sparrow & Henslow's Sparrow). This collection of recordings was truly a pleasure to select and edit. The diversity is striking. Some were recorded in small, brambly meadows surrounded by forest, while others come from prairie grasslands where shrubs and trees are scarce. But all are overflowing with sound, as if the grasses themselves are exhaling joyous music into the air. I cannot help but think of these soundscapes as “symphonies” or “choirs” whose choristers join together in unreserved celebration of life and the heavenly sky above.

Playback Volume: Play softly for optimal effect. It is important to listen at a volume that is similar to what you would actually experience in nature ... our meadow choristers whispering sweet music into your ears.

Product Details:

Type: Pure Nature Soundscapes (stereo/binaural)

Format: MP3 (256kbps) digital download

Length: 78:00

Date Published: February 2013

Recordists: Lang Elliott, Ted Mack, and Wil Hershberger

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