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Baby, I just died

DUMMERSTON
July 19 was a somber day for folk music. The great musicologist Alan Lomax died at the age of 87, and one of his direct musical descendants, the great but almost unknown Dave Carter, died at 49.

JOYCE MARCEL

Many people will be celebrating Lomax's life; he helped preserve America's and the world's musical heritage by making thousands of in-the-field recordings of folk, blues and jazz musicians from the 1930s onward. A smaller circle of fans will be mourning Dave Carter's loss, and I am one of them.

Dave Carter & Tracy Grammer — life and musical partners — were just getting started. Tracy sang lead and harmony and played fiddle and mandolin. Dave played guitar and banjo and wrote the songs. He used to say that all a song needs is two chords and the truth.

Dave & Tracy had just boarded that fickle folk train for fame and fortune, or at least as much fame and fortune as folk music ever provides. Joan Baez had toured with them. She compared Dave to Dylan and recorded his songs. The duo's

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Carter dead at 49

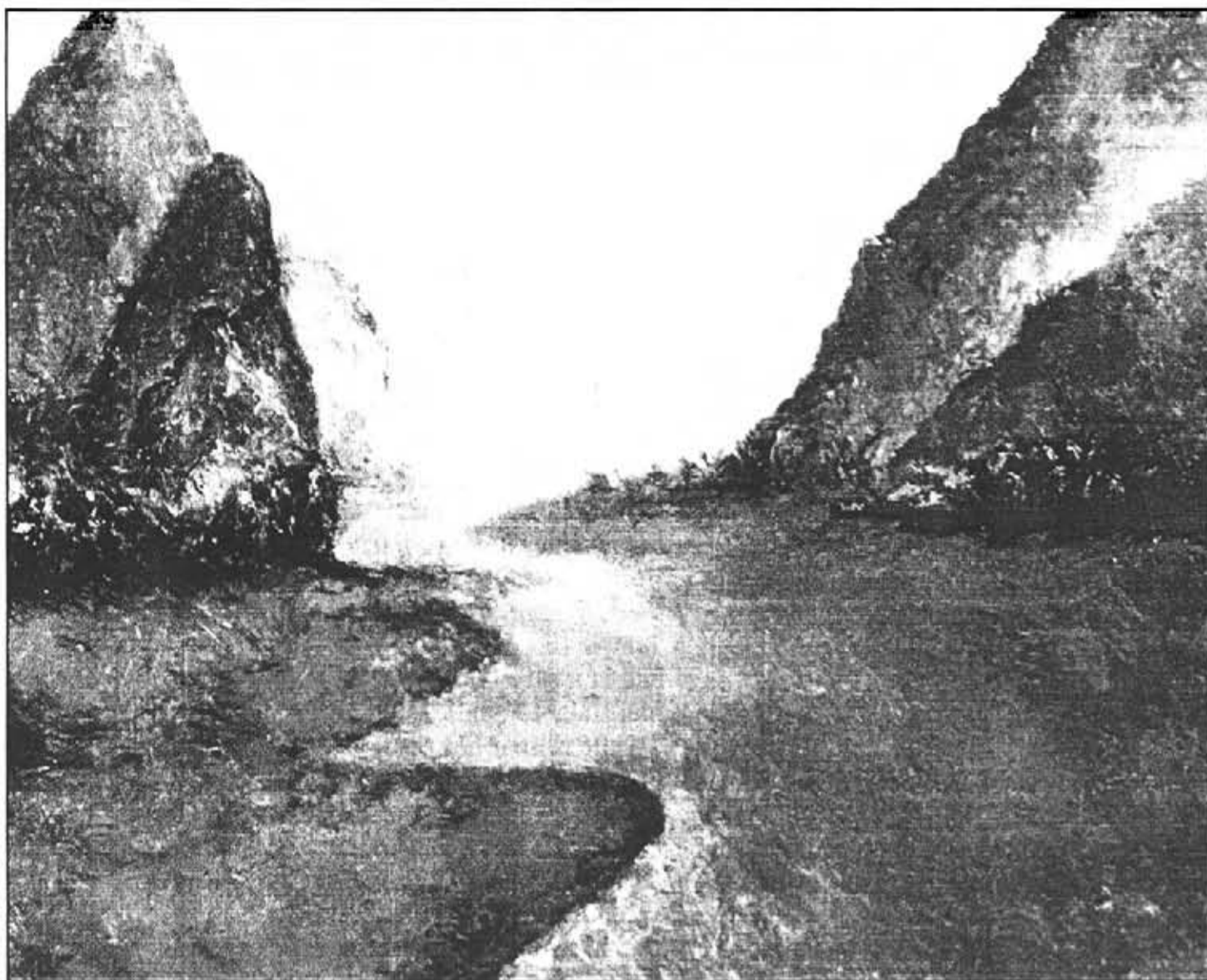
NORTHAMPTON, Mass. (AP) — Dave Carter, who with partner Tracy Grammer was one of the fastest-rising acts in folk music, has died at the age of 49.

Carter, who was to perform with Grammer on Saturday at a nearby festival, collapsed at a hotel Friday morning in Hadley. He was taken to Cooley Dickinson Hospital in Northampton, where he died shortly after noon, apparently from a heart attack.

The folk duo was scheduled to perform at the Hooker-Dunham Theater & Gallery on Tuesday, July 23, and Wednesday, July 24. The two performances were canceled and a concert in honor of Carter was planned for July 24. Those who purchased tickets for the Carter/Grammer concert can contact Wild Root Arts at (802) 254-9276 for a refund.

Many predicted Carter and Grammer would become major stars. The *Los Angeles Times* called him "a major

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Colors of the heart

Frantz paints with multicultural palette

BRATTLEBORO

I first saw Melissa Scheid Frantz's paintings at Lucca Bistro, a Brattleboro restaurant known for its fine Italian and Spanish cuisine. There, in the Tuscan sienna and gold of the restaurant's interior, her paintings evoked the exotic colors of travel to hot terrains.

When I met her recently at Windham Art Gallery, I was astonished to learn that some of her colorful paintings of quirky buildings are actually Chinese in origin. Jumping out of their frames like the illustrations of a favorite children's book, her vibrant oranges, sky-blues and pear-yellows could be taken from many peasant cultures — from Mexican casas to Italian courtyards. This series was painted while on a trip to China last fall with her husband, who travels there often in his work.

"Places like these are calling for color. (It is) hidden in the centuries-old alleys (this) beautiful country of browns and tans. The land interacts with these buildings that are crumbling. The color really shines through the temples," she explained as she showed me one of her portfolio paintings of a Tibetan temple in Beijing.

It is the intent of Frantz to find the personality in the objects of her paintings. For instance, some of her favorite subjects are "happy Buddhas," as she calls them. She has tapped into the Buddha nature of these bulging and delicately tinted

DIANA LISCHER-GOODBAND

fruits, creating her series of jolly Buddhas, smiling broadly from their voluminous pear shapes.

"Pears have been coined the 'fruit of the gods' and they are the fruit of my creativity," she explained.

In her series of jaunty village houses, there is a painting which portrays the Chinese homes as many earthenware vessels. The pottery-like structures tilt and dance haphazardly, as if each had their own spirit and ability to hop on the landscape.

In each of Frantz's paintings, there is a pathway — an opening for the viewer to enter and find his or her own way into the landscape she creates.

"I hope people will find a connection to the colors," she said. She likes to leave the imagination in her paintings open. "The viewer finishes the story," she said.

The waterscape "Li Jiang" is a mystical rendering of a Chinese river with surging pigment. Colors are unexpectedly reversed — red soil is reflected in the crimson water, the blue of the sky is painted onto the barren land.

"Energy isn't just found in the visible (it is in the) land, the people. In China, there is such a strong sense of community," Frantz explained.

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FOLK DUO Dave Carter and Tracy Grammer are seen in a publicity photo for Signature Sounds. Carter died July 19.

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Her paintings hold the "sacredness of community," she says. "Just living in Vermont — the colors here (are) intertwined into each piece." She sees the vibrancy of the people and the lands and paints in the vivid colors of the heart.

Born in Missouri, Frantz got the travel bug from her years as an "Army brat," when she lived with her multi-cultural family in West Germany and Panama. She never felt that her parents discouraged her from making art. In fifth grade she won her first school art contest and went on to win many more in the community. The words of her father, she recalled, made an early impression: "Never give this up."

It was during her four years at the River Gallery School that she was introduced to the "finger approach of painting." She does nearly every painting literally by hand, rarely using a brush, and etches her name into the paint with a bamboo skewer. Of the process she says, "(it's) so intimate, like you're sculpting the paint, the paper, the image." It is a "whole body" experience that allows

her to "feel centered."

Frantz says her art really blossomed when she joined Windham Art Gallery two years ago. She also attributes her success as an artist to the supportive teachers at River Gallery School. She finds that her identity as an artist is the one thing that she is certain of.

"It's like when you find your soul mate. My soul mate (is) my art," she said. It is the opportunity to share it with other people, she said, that brings her so much joy.

For the summer, Frantz is sharing her joy of creativity as a teacher at a multicultural summer camp in Amherst, Mass. She is interested in cultural diversity and education. The young children, she said, are energizing.

One of the rules she has for her students is: "Take risks with your creativity." She takes her own advice and paints colors felt and not always seen — painting from the unconscious, painting the energy felt in the beautiful landscapes and foreign communities she travels. In the fall, she will manage a cultural center at Hampshire College, but intends to remain



"Village Mist," by Melissa Scheid Frantz

active in the Brattleboro art scene. She currently lives in Newfane with her husband, Chris Frantz.

The color and whimsy of Melissa Scheid Frantz's work can be viewed at the following venues: Windham Art Gallery, 69 Main St. now through July 28; Windham Art Gallery, from Aug. 2 through Sept. 1, (she will co-curate this group show with

Marilyn Allen); Windham Art Gallery, from Sept. 6-29; Agora Gallery, Soho, N.Y., Sept. 13 through Oct. 3, with a reception Thursday, Sept. 19. For more information: artmelissa.com.

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