



divr
Is This Water

WE JAZZ
★★★★½

Playing music involving looping always has a hypnotic quality, so rote that to say that you've heard something like this before is almost hilariously on the nose. To loop and do something so distinctly different with the format, like surfing over a whirlpool, is a marvel to behold. It's absurd how good Swiss trio divr is at playing this music.

"Upeksha" seems to wash over the ear, hiding the sucker punch of the trio's con-

struction. It's a common trope for many of these songs: Even when playing what could be considered a more conventional composition, like "Supreme Sweetness," Philipp Eden plays with an ear both to the future of the genre and to the past. Bassist Raphael Walser seems to always find the right times to keep that hypnotism going and when to break the trance for a different sort of spell.

"Tea High" is a steady build of brilliance, climbing forever to sweet release, seemingly collapsing at the summit it reaches at the end. The cover of Radiohead's "All I Need" is the perfect deconstruction of the tune's melody and time, seemingly leaving Eden to lay out its phrases hither and yon, Jonas Ruther's boiling over on the drum kit by tune's end feeling almost like what Dave King would do on an early The Bad Plus album.

For an album of tunes that largely finds its pleasures in tacking along in one direction while finding different ways to go in the other, *Is This Water* is one of the most delightful sideways turns 2024 has to offer.

—Anthony Dean-Harris

Is This Water: As Of Now; Upeksha; Supreme Sweetness; 42; VHS Tomorrow; Tea High; All I Need; Echo's Answer; A Glass Is No Glass Is A Glass. (40:45).

Personnel: Philipp Eden, piano; Raphael Walser, bass; Jonas Ruther, drums.

Ordering info: mixeduprecords.com

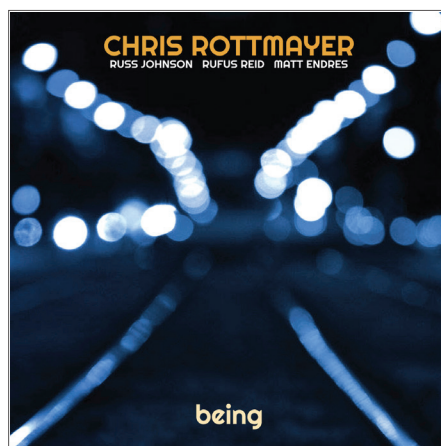
Chris Rottmayer
Being

SHIFTING PARADIGM
★★★★½

A prolific composer and diligent scholar of the jazz canon, Chris Rottmayer explores modal jazz and polytonal motifs on *Being*, his fourth album. This record pays homage to the legacy of pianist Mulgrew Miller and his time with the Woody Shaw Quintet.

Miller and Shaw's influence is palpable throughout the record, in big and small ways. Many of Rottmayer's compositions are in direct conversation with the modal concepts, polytonal motifs and harmonic planing techniques that characterized Miller and Shaw's works. "On The Street Where Woody Lives" leans on the chord progression of Shaw's "Green St. Caper." Here, Rottmayer's lines are joyous and unrelenting, reminiscent of Miller's dynamic melodies and vigorous playing. "Song Of Modes" pays homage to Shaw's "Song Of Songs" with modal motifs and wide intervals played by trumpeter Russ Johnson. "Ballerina Dance" is a foil to Shaw's "Katerina Ballerina," featuring an ethereal piano melody and an understated yet muscular rhythm played by bassist Rufus Reid.

Sprinkled throughout are meditations on Shaw's life in Paris, where he lived for more



than 20 years. "Rue des Lombards" is an ode to Paris' jazz clubs, featuring a frenetic melody by Johnson and Rottmayer and an effervescent drum solo that evokes a lively cabaret vibe.

Being is a lovingly meticulous study in modal jazz. Rottmayer and his quartet masterfully capture Miller's lyrical flair and Shaw's remarkable tonality while also bringing a distinct perspective and fluidity to the record.

—Ivana Ng

Being: On The Street Where Woody Lives; Re-United; Pigalle; Châtelet; Autumn Evening; Song Of Modes; Ballerina Dance; La Seizième; Pont Neuf; Rue des Lombards. (76:16)

Personnel: Chris Rottmayer, piano; Russ Johnson, trumpet, flugelhorn; Rufus Reid, bass; Matt Endres, drums.

Ordering info: shiftingparadigmrecords.com



Jun Iida
Evergreen

ORIGIN ARTS
★★★★½

Trumpeter Jun Iida, who makes his recording debut on *Evergreen*, grew up in St. Louis and Pittsburgh, spent time in Los Angeles, and during the past three years has lived in Seattle. Before relocating to New York, he recorded *Evergreen* to pay tribute to his period on the West Coast.

Iida has a mellow tone and a relaxed style. While his playing is somewhat laid back and unexciting, this is a solid start and his future development should be worth watching. His wide interests in music and versatility are on display during a release that features an excellent sextet with keyboardist Josh Nelson, guitarist Masami Kuroki, bassist Jonathan Richards, drummer Xavier Lecouturier and, as a bonus, singer Aubrey Johnson on a few numbers. Nelson often takes solo honors, guitarist Kuroki has a passionate style and Johnson is outstanding whenever she appears. The vocalist, who has a beautiful tone, mostly sings wordlessly in ensembles and hits some dazzling high notes but she also performs in Japanese on two numbers.

Iida contributes six of the 10 selections, including the infectious "Goody Butter Cake," the warm ballad "Song For Luke" and a thoughtful "My Anguish In Solidarity" inspired by George Floyd. Two numbers, the children's melody "Akatombo" and a jazz version of the J-Pop song "Shiki No Uta," have Iida paying tribute to two aspects of his Japanese heritage. Also included is a warm and melodic duet with Nelson on "Love Theme From Spartacus" and the boppish Sonny Rollins-Elmo Hope song "Bellarosa."

—Scott Yanow

Evergreen: Goody Butter Cake; Akatombo; Evergreen; Shiki No Uta; Bellarosa; Forgotten Memories; Love Theme From Spartacus; My Anguish In Solidarity; Song For Luke; Holding On To Autumn. (58:51)

Personnel: Jun Iida, trumpet; Aubrey Johnson, vocals; Masami Kuroki, guitar; Josh Nelson, piano, electric piano; Jonathan Richards, bass; Xavier Lecouturier, drums.

Ordering info: originarts.com