

Up until now Mike McCormick's name was unknown to me, but I am always curious to search for new music and musicians. My acquaintance with the guitarist's new album started with positive impressions from the very first moment, since the collection of instruments in the band immediately caught my attention.

It is worth to know about the band leader Mike McCormick that he is born in Canadian city of Yellowknife. Currently, however, he lives in the capital of Norway, Oslo, referring to himself as a guitarist and composer. He draws from personal life experience in the compositional process and gets inspiration from a lot of directions. He is influenced by both written and improvised music, by 20th century literature, electroacoustic music, and various branches of art.

In the summer of 2016 he decided to challenge his limits as a performer he will compose music which highlights the technical side of playing the guitar. Discovering the distance between him and his instrument, he became motivated to experiment [with this distance] in his life and his music. This influenced him to compose his songs with using collected letters, emails, and various messages as lyrics. As a result, we get compositions of a rather personal tone, presenting human intimacy from close, cozy, relationships.

The line-up is also exciting: we can hear Laura Swankey as a singer, Emily Denison plays the trumpet, and Knut Kvifte Nesheim plays the vibraphone and drums along with the band leader.

"trptych: I" opens the album, which starts with an already monotone guitar theme, joined by the ostinato of the drums, and then with the fading of the theme the trumpet provides the loose base. It is clear from the first moment that the author is not striving for the mainstream direction.

The second track is "alvorada," in which similarly to the previously mentioned trumpet tune we can hear the guitar creating an ambient atmosphere, which gets extended later on by the rest of the musicians.

After the fantastic meditative mood comes "in|takt," which is a very determined, extraordinarily intense song; "trptych: II," which is in a way the continuation, rethinking of the first song; and "madness," the title of which is already telling.

"moment: us" and "delicate matters" lead to the previously presented ambient sonority, melancholic melodies, invoking a immersive mood in the listener. The latter constitutes a kind of bridge between the ambient sonority and the madness experienced in "madness."

At the end there is still "trptych: III," a newer version of the very first song, then "isaac," about letting things go, which is why it is also a great conclusion to this album.

All in all, we could listen to a very interesting and exciting album. It is absolutely far from striving for marketability, it is an intense experiment from the first to the last second. Undoubtedly it diverges very much from the usual in several instances, but this is a trait of the excellent and curious authors. Always in search of the limits, expressing thoughts ever more, bridging the distance between the incomprehensible and the comprehensible, finding and utilizing the depth hidden in the musical tools.