

CD REVIEW

ARTIST: MICHAEL SCHIEFEL

TITLE: PLATYPUS TRIO

TABLE: BMC, 207

TUNES: LISTEN! / PLATYPUS DANCING / PLATYPUS ON THE BEACH / PLATYPUS MEDITATION / PLATYPUS SWIMMING / DREAMTIME PLATYPUS / PLATYPUS HAPPY / THE HOME OF THE PLATYPUS. 51:23.

PERSONNEL: Schiefel, vcl, electron; Jörg Brinkman, cel, electron; Miklòs Lukàcs, cimbalom. April 10-11, 2014. Budapest, Hungary.

Michael Schiefel delivers an organically trippy, labyrinthine soundscape with his 2014 release, Platypus Trio. The opening track, aptly named, Listen!, snags the ear early on with the cimbalom chiming on semi-tones and minor dissonance. Schiefel adds his metallic voice delicately, deliberately, seductively, as lubricant from the ear to the interstices of the brain stem, pulsing, delving, soaring smoothly, efficiently, excitingly. He achieves balance between the cascading musical composition, storytelling and improvisational singing. Complete with ear holding scats, blats and sa-doo-da-bloil-ba-da-hmmmm's, his voice weaves over and into the melodic themes held down by the cello, cimbalom and electronics.

The story of the Platypus stems from an Aboriginal tale, emphasizing a message of acceptance of self and others. Our uniquenesses and similarities hold weight in the musical motifs that toggle between consonance and cacophony. With each listening I am surprised at the tug of the music on my ear. He draws attention to the story on the longest track, "Dreamtime Platypus," weaving together words and scat vocables.

After more than six listenings, I am again drawn into the maze. I close my eyes and travel to places magical, open, cavernous, empty, like a Cirque Du Soleil planet with its funny, long, lively, colorfully strange characters. The last track, "The Home of the Platypus," ends energetically and abruptly. It urges the listener back to the first track with its mysteriously gentle, beautiful ping.

Marie Black

MARIE SWAN BLACK (CD Reviews) *identifies as a songwriter, lifelong singer, and a recording and performing artist. She teaches voice technique and vocal improvisation at her studio in Portland, Oregon. She considers the study of voice not only an artistic expression, but a holistic healing art.*

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