

Why is happiness so fleeting and so difficult to attain and hold onto? Why are there so many forces and tensions both inside ourselves and in the world around us, that actively oppose the very state of being we so desperately desire, namely happiness? How do we live in this contradiction, where happiness is our believed for destiny, but pain, failure and disappointment are our reality? Swiss born and world-traveled singer, lyricist, composer and arranger Sarah Buechi, uses poetic passion and intriguing soundscapes to ask those questions on this record. She resigns herself to an ongoing struggle for answers amidst life's challenges, and provides some comfort along the way as she succeeds artistically. For this project Buechi added a string trio to her usual piano trio, composing all the parts herself, and their dramatic chamber music stylings help to create an atmosphere of existential alienation and yearning. Buechi drips and drapes her lyrics and free form vocalizations over, under and around the contours of the music, painting a tapestry of quest, and leading the listener along in suspense. This is "art music," structurally challenging, somewhat experimental and boundary-stretching, but also lovely and eminently musical. As she walks in a remote hamlet in western Ireland ("Fahamore") both she and the music evoke a paradise of wild and untamed conflict, of "Tears—Relief—Fear—Readiness. The sea: A wild raging cat—crawling out of the water and onto the land—and into the landscape of my soul. Fear—and readiness—to face it—anytime." Arco bass and the spaciousness of the skipping strings form an impressionistic and emotional landscape on this song. On "Snow Trail" a buoyant drum intro on brushes leads to some Rickie Lee Jones sounding vocals that notice "A snow trail—I follow it with my eyes—I walk it in my mind on light feet—feeling only its soft texture, not its cold sting—Where do you think it might lead to?—It might lead to nowhere—and for how long?" The jazz trio and the string trio complement and surround each other well on this date, creating suitable moods to fit the vulnerable and sometimes bleak lyrics. Buechi is a mature singer with an older woman's world-weary wisdom, and the hopes and dreams of a young girl's heart.

***Mark Klafter, Cadence Magazine, July 2018***