

Yoko Miwa Trio - Pathways (2017)

Written by bluesever
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1. *Log O' Rhythm* (7:37) 2. *Lickety Split* (9:30) 3. *Court And Spark* (10:54) 4. *The Goalkeeper* (6:52) 5. *After You* (9:52) 6. *Lantern Light* (11:54) 7. *Was It Something I Said* (6:31) 8. *Dear Prudence* (8:45) Yoko Miwa – piano Will Slater – bass Scott Goulding – drums Brad Barrett - bass (8)

It sounds like Boston-based pianist Yoko Miwa gathered her trio mates—bassist Will Slater and drummer Scott Goulding—outside the studio door and said: "Let's have some fun!" The result is *Pathways*, her seventh release as a leader, in a discography that includes *Fadeless Flower* (Self Produced, 2004), *Canopy Of Stars* (Self Produced, 2007, and *Live At Sculler's Jazz Club* (Self Produced, 2011).

If ever there was a studio recording with the freshness and vitality of a live set, this is it. The group dynamic bounces with joy, and Oscar Peterson and Benny Green come to mind, stylistically, with Miwa's always engaging melodies dancing around propulsive rhythms. This is Yoko Miwa at her extroverted best. The trio is a relentless forward motion machine on the Marc Johnson-penned "Log O 'Rhythm." There is muscle in Miwa's delivery, mixed with an elegant melodic grace, as she proves herself, again, to be a stellar interpreter of tunes not her own.

Miwa's own "Lickety Split" showcases the pianist powering down chords with a nail gun intensity, while her right hand gives off off sparks.

"Court And Spark," from Joni Mitchell's groundbreaking 1974 Asylum Records album of the same name, reigns in the momentum, but not the beauty. Mitchell's songs are oddly gorgeous, different than anything anybody else writes. Miwa keeps the colors in the dark end of the

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spectrum on the most inward piece on this set.

The trio revisits the Marc Johnson songbook with "After You," a light-stepping, light-hearted, Latin-esque romp, leading into the Miwa-penned "Lantern Light," full of subdued majesty tinted with melancholy.

Miwa wraps it up with The Beatles (John Lennon's) "Dear Prudence," with Brad Barrett replacing Will Slater in the bass slot. A measured pace and powerful percolation back Miwa's stormy piano work, to close out her finest recording to date. ---Dan McClenaghan, allaboutjazz.com

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