

Derek Piotr // Tempatempat



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New England based sound artist Derek Piotr has set Indonesian music at the heart of his latest album, *Tempatempat*. The title, ‘an Indonesian word chosen for its repetition and meaning’ can either mean ‘forging place’ or ‘fourth place’, depending on how you break the word, which is a good preview of the sonic vision that lies ahead. In his fourth album, Piotr fuses Indonesian music with his electronic and vocal background, honing the elements into a beautiful, exciting set of tracks.

Tempatempat falls perfectly into place as soon as the opener, “Bhadrakali”, starts: at the drop of a low drum, catchy rhythms spring forward. Static surrounds this steady pulse like river water; think a field recording filled with glitches, only the glitches and buzzes all happen in time. It’s entrancing— gamelan sounds mix in and Piotr sings Indonesian melodies through a slightly warped, gently distorted filter. The track grows more melodic as Gendèr (Indonesian metallophone) sounds out descending scales, which make for a comforting comeback throughout the album.

Piotr’s work has always been focused on vocals; this can be seen in “Rift”, a track produced entirely using his voice. In this track, Piotr seems to almost ignore Western music theory; his multi-layered vocals collide with each other, over and over in a series of dissonance. It’s unsettling, but never unbearable – the relentless development of the track holds your attention, background static in restlessly puncturing the cascading vocal lines.

The glitch aesthetic manifests best in “Terminal”, which begins with deep bass hits, a glitchy, sparse background offsetting another set of dissonant vocals. Rapid percussion skips like a broken record, creating a dizzying ferocity that showcases the album’s two best qualities: Piotr’s innovative vocal manipulation and obsession with electronic noise.

Piotr is unafraid to use whatever sounds he finds intriguing; this leads to his work being labelled as experimental. But *Tempatempat* is unexpectedly accessible— the fearless exploration of timbre and harmony never leaves you bored, and the meticulous production and structure always leaves something for you to hold onto without being overwhelmed. The album’s quiet moments are just as entrancing: “Stay” slowly pulls flat vocal lines into the track until they’re stretched for minutes at a time, the landscape ever expanding. In *Tempatempat*, a voice will drone on for two minutes, or a phrase will be cut into tiny fragments and scattered all over the track. This is a versatile and gripping album.