

Phronesis Walking Dark review, The Australian **** 2012

THIS fourth album from the British-Scandinavian trio led by bassist Jasper Hoiby refers to a live concert series Pitch Black, played in total darkness as a dedication to the leader's visually impaired sister.

Pianist Ivo Neame and drummer Anton Eger added three compositions each to Hoiby's six originals, giving the collection a Nordic noir atmosphere, strongly rhythmic mostly and with extensive Eurojazz classical influences.

Solo passages from bass and piano are often fugue-like, but with a pulse and brushed drums evident though quietened, as in Zieding, which moves through several variations of such sequences.

American Jesus opens with a hurrying, repetitive piano theme driven by busy, clickety drums and cymbal splashes, then lapses into flowing introspection before the drums pick up the original speed, pushing bass and piano along to an abrupt conclusion.

A bass pattern leads in Suede Trees as the piano ornaments lightly, and the bass solo moves quickly and adroitly before plunging to pedal notes under a hectic brush solo. The title track has the bass moving sinuously under the piano, then in unison as the pace quickens and classical style motifs come to the fore before a staccato close.

Two lengthy uptempo bass solos packed with dextrous ideas enliven Democracy after a vaguely chronometric opening, returning to a dreamy sequence before a racy lead up to a big chord finish.

JOHN MCBEATH