

Phronesis 'Alive' Jazz Album of the Year 2010

Not since 2007, when Empirical hit the top spot, has a young British band caused such a stir among Jazzwise scribes. Yet, although Phronesis come with a made-in-Britain stamp, they consist of only one Brit (pianist Ivo Neame), a Dane (bassist Jasper Høiby) and a Swede (drummer Anton Eger). Above all leader Høiby's full-bodied double bass sonic coupled with his strong physical presence and rhythmic agility has been driving normally mild-mannered jazz audiences wild both here and more recently on the continent. As the number of contemporary acoustic piano trios reaches saturation point, Phronesis are the complete package and were described as "the most exciting and imaginative piano trio since EST" by Jazzwise editor Jon Newey in early 2010. They take the infectious grooves and Nordic tone redolent of EST in an entirely new direction; with their spicy rhythms and original folky Mediterranean themes. But Phronesis never cuts its umbilical cord to its roots in ensemble jazz improv.

Following on from last year's impressive studio recording *Green Delay*, *Alive* is a 'live' recording for hip UK indie Edition Records with tracks selected from two nights of performances in the Forge Arts venue in Camden Town. The title says all you need to know about a trio who have the killer punch when it comes to live performance. For the recording Høiby was forced to make a last minute change with Israeli bass star Avishai Cohen's NY-based percussionist Mark Guiliana, stepping in for Copenhagen-based, Swedish monster drummer Anton Eger who was temporarily out of the country at the time. Not a bad one to have on the bench especially as Høiby is Avishai's number one fan. Expect even greater things from this trio in 2011 but for now savour the very best from this year's homegrown jazz.

– Selwyn Harris