

## Phronesis 'Walking Dark' review, Jazzwise 2012 \*\*\*\*

How do you follow up a Jazz CD of the Year in both Jazzwise and Mojo? The answer is you don't even try. If 'Walking Dark' is the equal of 2010's 'Alive', which it arguably is, Phronesis is still most unlikely to top the charts in 2012 - that's in the nature of these things. In any case the albums are different beasts altogether. This is a studio and not a live album as 'Alive' was (their fourth release in total).

As well, the London-based bassist-leader Jasper Høiby has his regular drummer Anton Eger back in the fold, replacing the temping ex-Avishai Cohen drummer Mark Guiliana who appeared just on 'Alive'. Eger has a very close understanding with Høiby, their tightly woven cross rhythms are bursting with excitement. Eger and Neame contribute some of their own tunes for the first time putting their differing personalities on the Phronesis identity, even though the sound of the trio is inevitably more recognisable from Høiby's writing, led by his infectious, slinky bass grooves and a yearning, vocalised quality that echoes Høiby's role model, the Israeli bassist Avishai Cohen and something of Chick Corea's flamenco-ish side - although his 'Lipwash' has a more lopsided Bad Plus feel about it. Pianist Ivo Neame is at his best here too; counterpointing with some soulfully melancholic acoustic piano. But the secret of Phronesis is it stands for more than the sum of its parts and this outstanding album has got to be the best example of that to date.

Selwyn Harris