

Phronesis Walking Dark review, Sydney Morning Herald **** 2012

Jazz spawned the drum kit, and all of the music's subsequent developments have been accompanied by revolutions in drumming. Now conceptual and technical innovations are kindling new directions jazz may take. You can hear it happening locally almost every time Simon Barker plays.

Two drummers driving innovations overseas are Mark Guiliana and Anton Eger. Guiliana played on Phronesis's last album and Eger is on this one, suggesting the band's leader, Jasper Høiby, is alive to the way they open up the music.

Eger creates a rustling, continuously shifting rhythmic texture of little sounds, including extensively hitting the rims, rather than the actual drums. The ensuing stream of rhythmic precision unlocks a vast dynamic range, as the music can fall to a whisper while still having a turbocharged propulsion. This changes the relationship between the instruments almost as dramatically as Scott LaFaro's melodic approach to bass playing did in the Bill Evans Trio of 1961.

Eger provides Høiby (bass) with much broader rhythmic options, while Ivo Neame can fully exploit the piano's sonic potential without having to fight a constant maze of overtones generated by conventional ride-cymbal patterns.

The compositions (by all three) fascinate and engage, and the improvising brims with glorious ideas and interaction.

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