

## Phronesis 'Alive' review, Jazzwise 2010 \*\*\*\*

To a larger extent than many of their contemporaries, Danish-born double bassist Jasper Høiby's Phronesis make music not only for the mind and heart but also for the body. This is their third album to date but the first for Cardiff-based label Edition who have recorded the piano trio in their natural habitat: in front of a live audience.

It's a selection of material culled from two consecutive nights at the Forge in Camden Town. Live recordings are usually unmanageable but this one has been put together with a lot of TLC, meaning attention to detail in every area. It has paid healthy dividends, with a live sonic that reflects the band's ability to join together intimacy and energy, the tender and animalistic. It's all in spite of regular member, the Copenhagen-based Swedish drummer Anton Eger, having to be replaced in a lastminute.com-type line-up change. Høiby couldn't have got a better replacement if they'd had all year to find one. New York-based drummer Mark Guiliana is a real scoop. Best known for his tenure with bassist Avishai Cohen, who's the main role model for Høiby's virile, percussive bass style, Guiliana also works with excellent New York pianist Jason Lindner and vocalist Gretchen Parlato. Here, the drummer's explosive polyrhythmic palette is always tempered by a great pair of ears. There have been comparisons with EST, and although Phronesis shares with them a pulsating sense of groove there is less of an emphasis on any contemplative Nordic roots as such. Rather Høiby's wonderfully sensuous, memorable Mediterranean and eastern folk-flavoured themes tend to resonate more with Avishai Cohen's. At the same time there's a classic piano trio jazz heritage that's mainly down to the ever-improving pianist Ivo Neame. Though he sometimes recalls Chick Corea's Spanish-tinged percussive fluidity, Jarrett's rhapsodising, McCoy Tyner's trancey Trane period and even Mehdau's pastoral folk-pop piano in places, Neame has his own way of doing things. ALIVE is about as exciting as it can get without actually seeing this band live and in the flesh.

Selwyn Harris, Jazzwise