

Phronesis 'Alive' review, Bass Guitar Magazine 2010

ALIVE IN LONDON is Danish Bassist Jasper Høiby's trio's third release to date and is the sort of album that should get bigger jazz names quaking in their boots.

Bottled live over two nights at North London Venue the Forge, the music bristles with confidence and it has been recorded with sublime depth and clarity; this is muscular modern jazz packed with melody and attitude.

While Høiby wears his influences of Avishai Cohen and EST on his sleeve, his heart is there too in his massive tone that's full of pent-up emotions but also delivers plenty of thunderous grooves.

Pianist Ivo Neame is another rising star, and here he adds shimmering layers of chords and darting deft improvisations much like a young Keith Jarrett. US drummer Mark Guiliana is the album's ace in the hole as he brings a dazzling array of rhythmic ideas to the party, full of creativity and explosive power.

Høiby himself follows in the footsteps of many superlative bassists, like NHØP and Arild Andersen, but there's a Haden-like warmth to his tone and he always plays for the song, letting his long solo lines unfold with grace and power. The album's boiling high point is the ten-minute 'Abraham's New Gift', which starts with a tricky solo bass

groove, collapses and then builds around Neame's solo, and culminates in a crackling Guiliana drum solo. Anyone who doubts there's a UK jazz scene worth taking note of should listen to Phronesis, who are proof positive that we have bands that are worthy of jazz's premier league right on our doorstep.

Mike Flynn, Bass Guitar Magazine