

Phronesis Walking Dark review, BBC Music Magazine ***** 2012

Three for all.

Barry Witherden enjoys the latest disc from contemporary jazz trio sensation Phronesis.

With much current jazz, outright improvisation is less significant than in classic 'mainstream' and 'modern' styles, where the foundations of a composition might survive but something new is built on them. Many young players today concentrate on decoration and surface alterations, throwing greater attention (and strain) on the compositions. Phronesis occupy a pleasing middle-ground. Their compositions are attractive and strong, with writing duties split between all three players. Their improvisations are engaging and supple, and really seem to be going somewhere, rather than harking back, quoting themes or riffs.

Neame often produces instantly-whistleable phrases without descending into cliché. Høiby's always-dependable bass binds everything together. Eger defends his status as an equal third of the trio without succumbing to drummers' megalomania. This is arguably the best disc yet from one of the best of the bunch of contemporary bands.