

# Tomas Franck with NIELS LAN DOKY, MADS VINDING & ALBERT „TOOTIE“ HEATH

## THE COPENHAGEN CONNECTION

These days, while many young musicians discover new expressions in crossover projects and experiments, and grind out hundreds of CDs from alternative studios and cold basements, calling it 'jazz', it is most interesting to experience a (still young) musician like Niels Lan Doky with dedication and sincerity reaching out with hands, ears and heart toward the past in celebration of a tradition. Doky's very warm and charming film 'Between A Smile And A Tear' brought musical witnesses from the famed 'Montmartre Jazzhouse' in Copenhagen forth. Johnny Griffin, Tootie Heath, Mads Vinding, Toots Thielemans and others were united to relive happy and wild memories from the 60's and 70's in the 'Jazz Center of Europe'.

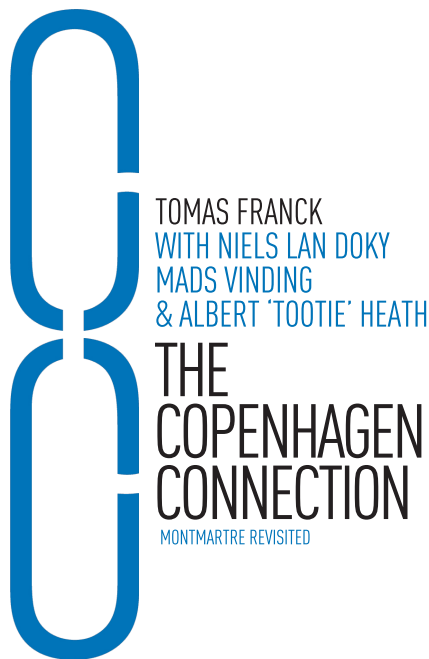
"That period created the foundation for what we play now and, yes, I am deeply fascinated by the myth of 'The Old Montmartre' which I was too young to experience", says Lan Doky, who is also the man behind THE COPENHAGEN CONNECTION.

This session tips its hat to several tenor saxmen, who at some time performed on the small stage in Montmartre during the 15 years the party lasted. The tenor on centre stage here is Tomas Franck (b. 1958 – the year Montmartre opened). It is especially his homage to those sax-men who came before him.

However, two of the important musicians from that period are very present here, bassist Mads Vinding (b.1948) and drummer Albert 'Tootie' Heath (b.1935). 'Tootie' would take the chair when house drummer Alex Riel was off, and Vinding often stood in for Niels Henning Ørsted Pedersen along with Bo Stief and others. Back then Kenny Drew would play the grand piano in the smoke-filled 160 m2 - including kitchen and checkroom.

Producer and pianist on THE COPENHAGEN CONNECTION, Niels Lan Doky (b.1963) has a thorough knowledge of the many tenor saxophonists that took the stage for long or short spells - Brew Moore, Don Byas, Yusef Lateef, Zoot Sims, Al Cohn - but on this album he chose to pay homage to those of them, who were a natural inspiration to the big Swede, Tomas Franck. "Tomas is a perfect blend

of post-Coltrane and something particularly Scandinavian. I think Tomas is an outstanding musician, and working with him, Mads and 'Tootie' is a great thrill. THE COPENHAGEN CONNECTION is an old-fashioned blowing session, and a tribute to a period that I only experienced the tail-end of - but enough to become fascinated by jazz people, their craft and their personalities – THE COPENHAGEN CONNECTION is my way of repaying that."



Tomas Franck – with the leading role on this album – also enjoyed the session. "Of course this was Niels Lan Doky's idea. I had never played with 'Tootie' Heath before - unique. Lan and I have known each other for 20 years. He suggested a lot of things, and I suggested a few. The Apartment, for instance, was on a Dexter Gordon record that I bought in my youth and was crazy about, and it was the same for him. That was the golden era - most of the songs were already in my bag,.... We had the repertoire, so we met up in the studio and talked, ate lunch - and then it happened. Everything fell into place - that's the great thing about jazz: there are never problems with trends and generation gaps. And we were several generations with the same musical language. Mads played with everybody, back then. He must have been a very young boy!.. And 'Tootie' played the drums

on many albums with my idols - Coltrane and Rollins - and here he was, and I was playing with him!"

"It's important to me not to imitate or steal licks, but let myself be inspired by the sax-players we are paying tribute to. But of course I thought about them while we played, Stan Getz, Dexter Gordon, Bent Jædig, Ernie Wilkins, Johnny Griffin, Ben Webster, Joe Henderson, Wayne Shorter, Sonny Rollins and Jimmy Heath - so they are there someplace – or nearby."

A whole generation of jazz aficionados was lucky enough to receive their musical upbringing when a large handful American musicians chose Copenhagen as their new home and the Montmartre club as their base - or just stopped by for a short or prolonged visit. On THE COPENHAGEN CONNECTION Tomas Franck pays homage to many of the saxophonist that visited Copenhagen. The spirit from back then inspires his large and powerful sound to new heights. THE COPENHAGEN CONNECTION bursts in a vibrant and vital tribute, not only to a past era, but to jazz in general.

THE COPENHAGEN CONNECTION is Tomas Franck's fourth STUNT release.

Previous releases are BEWITCHED (1988), CRYSTAL BALL (1994) and AT THE CIRCUS (1999). This luxurious CD is more than just music - Hans Sørensen from Focus Recording is the man behind the exceptional recording sound, and the booklet includes numerous photographs by Jan Persson and knowledgeable and entertaining notes by Henrik Iversen - both first class witnesses from back then, and very much alive!

Tomas Franck (ts), Niels Lan Doky (p), Mads Vinding (b), Albert 'Tootie' Heath (dr)

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