

JESPER THILO ON CLARINET



Stunt Records
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Many people feel that the clarinet's expressive range is limited. Although a well-established instrument in jazz, a whole record of clarinet often becomes a monotonous experience. However, skeptics will change their minds when listening to JESPER THILO ON CLARINET. Few instrumentalists have the musical talent and authority to transcend the built-in limitations of an instrument. Jesper Thilo is one such musician.

The idea of a whole CD dedicated to the clarinet entered Jesper Thilo's musical life at a late stage. Born in 1941, he began playing the saxophone at the age of 11, and he can meet just about any challenge on the instrument with honors. But the saxophone didn't fit in with New Orleans music, so he was presented with a clarinet in his early teens. It has followed him ever since throughout a great career. He has always considered himself a saxophonist, but six years of classical conservatory training on the clarinet will certainly influence a musician's approach to an instrument. And we guarantee that Jesper Thilo has not lost his touch.

Although he has retained his classical aesthetic and virtuosity, he is 100% full-blooded jazz musician. Thilo's clarinet sound is flexible and organic, and he always has a story to tell. He makes music swing – on this CD in the company of his regular group of fine Danish musicians: Pianist Olivier Antunes, bassist Bo Stief and drummer Frands Rifbjerg. The repertoire is culled from the Great American Songbook, and the CD starts out with a wonderful "New Orleans Medley" culminating in an explosive interpretation of "Way Down Yonder in New Orleans". From beginning to end, the CD is full of with fresh vitality, sparkling imagination and myriads of fine detail. 1953-60 Jesper Thilo played clarinet in various New Orleans groups, but his real breakthrough was on tenor sax in Arnvid

Meyer's orchestra 1960-64 with a virile swing style inspired by Ben Webster and Coleman Hawkins. He was a member of the Danish Radio Big Band 1966-89, and he has been a featured soloist in symphony orchestras. He was voted Danish Jazz Musician of the Year in 1971, and in 1977 he was the first recipient of the Ben Webster Prize. The list of awards is long, and most recently he was celebrated by his colleagues with the Danish Musicians Union's honorary award, which was coupled with a speech in which he was called "the beacon in Danish jazz".

Since 1985 Thilo has led his own groups in a career earning him an international reputation, performing and recording with many of the world's finest jazz musicians: Edmond Hall, J.C. Higginbotham, Roy Eldridge, Ben Webster, Coleman Hawkins, Benny Carter, Harry "Sweets" Edison, Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis, Vic Dickenson, Dizzy Gillespie, Clark Terry and many, many more.

Over the years, it has sometimes been said of Jesper Thilo that he was a "copycat", and it is true that his outstanding technique allows him to emulate almost anyone. To his mind, this is not a negative statement. In his opinion a good copy is often better than a problematic original. But his many loyal followers at home and abroad will know that Thilo has long since found his own voice.

However, ON CLARINET will probably surprise even the most incarnate Jesper Thilo aficionado. And those who are new to the fold will be blown away.

Jesper Thilo has a long list behind him of recordings leading small groups. His two latest STUNT releases are with a big band (HOT HOUSE) and with strings (REMEMBERING THOSE WHO WERE). But Denmark's most popular jazz musician was ready for a new challenge – ON CLARINET.

New Orleans Medley: New Orleans - Do You Know What It Is To Miss New Orleans - Way Down Yonder In New Orleans / Pennies From Heaven / The Masquerade Is Over / Doxy / Shine / If I Had You / Just You, Just Me / Mood Indigo / Perdido.

Jesper Thilo (cl), Olivier Antunes (p), Bo Stief (b), Frands Rifbjerg (dr).

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