

Tobias Wiklund

WHERE THE SPIRITS EAT

Released on CD, LP, and Digital

Stunt Records



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Once, it was easy to categorize Jazz. Musicians chose or were assigned to a single sub-genre and from then on were simply known as “that” kind of musician (bebop, swing, traditional, etc). Times have changed, and the young Swedish trumpeter and cornetist Tobias Wiklund is a perfect example of a new breed of musician who are neither easy to classify nor difficult to identify. His strong appreciation for a wide range of musical genres can be traced back to childhood. Wiklund was born in Sweden in 1986 and grew up in Gävle – a city with a strong musical identity. He was interested in Jazz and other non-classical genres early on but it was upon receiving a Louis Armstrong album from his father that he first fell in love with the trumpet. He’s said that it’s wasn’t so much what Armstrong was playing that made him gravitate toward the brass instrument, but the energy in the playing. And it’s that energy that Wiklund has continued to work with throughout his career.

After studying music in Sweden, a 20-year-old Tobias moved to Copenhagen to continue his education at the Rhythmic Conservatory and quickly became a permanent part of the city’s Jazz community. He’s an in-demand musician and best known as a trumpet player in both Sweden and Denmark, often found subbing in the trumpet sections of the DR Big Band and Stockholm Jazz Orchestra. However, when he plays in smaller groups (such as in Norwegian/Danish drummer Snorre Kirk’s deservedly celebrated quintet; in Kira Skov and Maria Faust’s projects; or, like here, with his own band) he always turns to his preferred instrument – the cornet. The cornet is darker and less angular in its sound than the trumpet, and much of Wiklund’s personal expression comes from this choice of horn. In the early days of Jazz, it was just as common as the trumpet, but in modern times, very few play it exclusively.

With a great love for many forms of music, Wiklund moves freely between modern artistic expression and a more traditional sound. Here, on his debut as a leader, he’s assembled a repertoire of 11 songs including nine originals covering intense minimalism, beautiful ballads, and outgoing, swinging jazz. Listeners will also find two songs popularized by Louis Armstrong,

Song of the Vipers and Weather Bird, appearing here as a tribute to “the past.” Tobias has a unique ability to refer to and lean on a story, but he’s also a very personal musician whose voice is built on an expressive approach, great technique, and an incredibly beautiful sound on his instrument.

On this album, the energy and swing are what drive Wiklund and his fellow musicians – specifically, a free and open interpretation of “swing,” one that doesn’t depend on the rhythm section pushing forward in unison. The bass doesn’t always have to walk at a fixed tempo, the drums don’t have to play on but rather around the beat, and the piano doesn’t need to accompany in a traditional sense. Wiklund reminds listeners that energy in music doesn’t need to be overstated or exaggerated. Energy is just as often found between the lines and in the freedom of the band members to chase a spontaneous idea. This freedom is made possible by the profound personal and musical familiarity that’s obvious between Wiklund and the other players who share his ideas – Swedish drummer Daniel Fredriksson, and the two Danes, bassist Lasse Mørck and pianist Simon Toldam, who are known for their contributions to advanced improvised music. Wiklund’s rounder and darker tone don’t stop him from intermittently bursting into dazzling cascades on his instrument. Those who associate Swedish jazz with melancholic folk music have taken a wrong turn if they think that’s all they can expect with Wiklund. He offers so much more and seems to want to embrace all of jazz, its entire history, and all of its facets of expression.

For many years (and arguably still today), a small, modern jazz quartet was typically represented by a lone tenor saxophonist in front of a rhythm section: the tenor sax has long occupied the throne of inspiration, where Louis Armstrong placed the trumpet many years before. Now, it’s become less rare to see a trumpeter (or cornetist) leading a jazz group. The trumpet’s story in jazz music has unfolded as a tale of greatness, decline, and revival in new forms. Enrico Rava, Till Brönner, Ambrose Akinmusire, Dave Douglas, Ben Lamar Gay, Kirk Knuffke, and Avishai Cohen are all musicians who have chosen a newer path, but there are others, too, and on this release, the world is introduced to a new one – Swedish Tobias Wiklund.

Tobias Wiklund (Cornet), Simon Toldam (Piano), Lasse Mørck (Bass), Daniel Fredriksson (Drums)

Where the Spirits Eat / Dancing to the Drum of No Conscience / Song of the Vipers / Smoke / The Janitor /
Mycket Viktigt Meddelande / Weather Bird Rag / Beefroot Interlude / Beefroot / Saved By You /
Waking Up on Buffalo Hill / City in the Sky.

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