

Allan Botschinsky

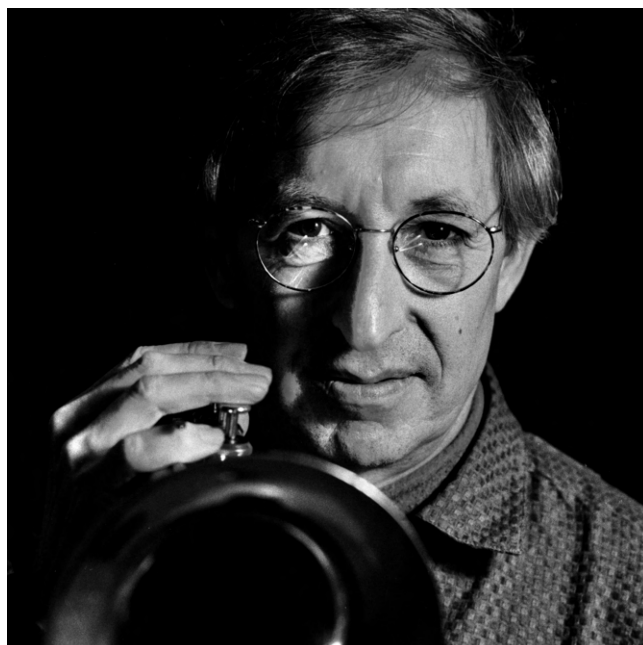
Quintet

Bent Jædig, Jacob Fischer, Jesper Lundgaard, Alex Riel

LIVE AT THE TIVOLI GARDENS 1996

Published on dual CD and digital

Stunt Records



STUCD 22042 (2CD)



Danish trumpeter Allan Botschinsky's legacy as one of the greatest Scandinavian musicians of all time is now the stuff of legend, with glimpses of his creative and virtuosic voice remaining in recordings. The tragically underappreciated trumpet and cornet player was named *Danish Jazz Musician of the Year* in 1963 and came to even greater notoriety in the 1970s and 80s, but would, unfortunately, slip into public anonymity after he moved to Germany and then London. He was active as a recording artist in his later years, but would ultimately leave far too little evidence behind accurately demonstrating his technical and creative prowess.

Stunt Records unearthed some particularly unique and inspiring material from a 1996 concert at *Jazzhus Slukefter* with Allan Botschinsky's quartet - which, in addition to the leader (1940-2020), consisted of tenor saxophonist Bent Jædig (1935-2004), another iconic legend who is anything but overrepresented on recordings; a young, budding Jacob Fischer on guitar; bassist Jesper Lundgaard; and drummer Alex Riel. It would be challenging to put together a stronger ensemble in Denmark or even Europe at that time, and this group plays up to their reputations as stars - some of whom were already established, and others who were gaining momentum exponentially. All of the musicians in the band are recipients of the prestigious Ben Webster Prize, an award given annually to the best Danish jazz musicians - or foreign colleagues who have eventually called Denmark home.

On the night of this concert and recording in 1996, it was trumpeter Allan Botschinsky who led the band and called the tunes - and who actually exclusively played flugelhorn instead of trumpet. Botschinsky had already made his mark on the Scandinavian jazz scene by the mid-1950s and was among the first Danish musicians to truly speak the language of *bebop* fluently. The same could be said of tenor saxophonist Bent Jædig, who spent many years touring alongside like-minded musicians on the European jazz circuit - until 1969, when he chose to stay more or less put, in Denmark. He was a member of the Danish Radio Big Band for 14 years and a freelancer of the highest caliber and reputation. Jædig would also lead his own groups over the years and decades that followed and often found himself surrounded himself by hungry, younger musicians who experienced firsthand that one could learn more about jazz in a single night with Bent than in an entire semester at a conservatory.

Back in 1996, Berlingske Tidende's then-jazz critic, Kjeld Frandsen, wrote a review in which he called the concert "pure jazz from the veterans." Frandsen also wrote the liner notes for this release and in them, he mentions that the experience of hearing the music again now, 25 years later, supports his memory of the live show at the time.



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Back then, he highlighted Botschinsky's beautiful flugel-horn sound and how "he effortlessly formulates ideas in long, logical runs." About Frandsen wrote that Bent Jædig's playing is "incredibly inspired, as always," and that there is "never a mistake regarding intonation, never a moment of idleness, and never unnecessary provocation - just a constant, unwavering stream of intriguing personal statements." The "exquisite rhythm section" is also given deserved attention in the original review, specifically Riel's dynamic drumming and Lundgaard's steadily pulsating and organic bass playing. The then 28-year-old Jacob Fischer was *the kid* in the group, who "as always, is calm, well-mannered, and completely in balance with himself and the music. The chordal work is sublime, and time and time again you have to be fascinated by the solo playing, which is constantly surprising and in perpetual motion."

The recording is another kind of historical document, as well - bringing back fond memories of the now long-gone and aptly named venue *Slukefter*, located in Copenhagen's Tivoli Gardens, the setting for performances by both local and international artists, but also a place where regular folks would frequent after a day of work in the office or on the land to unwind and "switch off." The very mixed audience of listeners and social drinkers was sometimes divided on their appreciation (or lack thereof) for the music and performing musicians. Fortunately - both for the members of the Allan

Botschinsky quintet on the summer evening in question during the Copenhagen Jazz Festival of 1996, and listeners of the recently excavated recording today - there was rarely a negative response from the audience as everyone seemed to enjoy where five of the Danish jazz scene's finest musicians had met.

The recording from *Slukefter* is fully intact and fresh with "pure jazz cut from the cloth of standards & bebop." It's simply jazz - at its very best. A number of well-known and well-traveled vehicles from the great American songbook get taken for a tour by these historically great chauffeurs and navigators, who abide by and stretch out using the creative rules of the game. Each of the 11 songs runs for 10-15 minutes, which allows for each personality and voice to fully immerse themselves and spread their wings to their hearts' desire. It's an album that captures a moment in time, rich with a wealth of fine details - and yes, as Kjeld Frandsen wrote 25 years ago, the music is indeed free of idleness. As a nice contrast to the more open tunes, we get stunning treatments of ballads, kept down in humble tempos while reimagined with lyrical fearlessness and respect. Frandsen writes that the word masterpiece "does not seem to suffice" - a statement true to the magic of the moment in 1996, and which resonates with having survived the test of time, now, in 2022.

CD 1: Four / A Song for Anna Sophia / It's You Or No One / I Thought About You / What's New / Donna Lee

CD 2: What Is This Thing Called Love / All of You / Rhythm-a-Ning / It Might As Well Be Spring / I'll Remember April

Allan Botschinsky (tp), Bent Jædig (ts), Jacob Fischer (g), Jesper Lundgaard (b), Alex Riel (dr)

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