

Lars Møller/Geri Allen/Buster Williams/Billy Hart

JAZZPAR CONCERTS 2003

For the last ten years tenor saxophonist Lars Møller (born 1966) has been a key figure on the Danish jazz scene, with more varied musical activities than most. Not only is he an instrumentalist of international calibre, admired for his beautiful, masculine tone and highly developed technique and creativity. He has also cultivated his compositional talent with great success, both in small ensembles (in particular the Lars Møller Group), in big bands (e.g. the experimental band The Orchestra) and in cross-over projects such as Den 3. Vej (*The Third Way*), where he has written music for a symphony orchestra. And in addition he has made a name for himself as a member of leading Danish jazz orchestras such as The Danish Radio Big Band, Klüvers Big Band, The Sound of Choice Ensemble and Kasper Villaume Quartet.

In 1989 Møller made his first recording for Stunt Records, "Copenhagen Groove", in the classic quartet format with sax, piano, bass and legendary Jimmy Cobb on drums. On the follow-up, "Pyramid" (1989), Billy Hart sat in as rhythm master. These cd's are marked by a great love of the American jazz tradition. Since then Møller has really revealed his great talent. With his regular band for almost ten years, Lars Møller Group, he has recorded a number of brilliant cd's, inter alia "Cross Current" (1995) and the Danish Grammy winner "Kaleidoscope" (1998), where the American jazz inspiration merges beautifully with that from the Indian and Nordic music cultures.

And now Møller has returned to his starting point: The American quartet format. With "JAZZPAR Concerts 2003" Lars Møller's career so far has come full circle - a live recording from last year's JAZZPAR events, where American Andrew Hill was the prize winner, and Møller was the chosen Danish musician who was given the opportunity to handpick his dream musicians, tour and record a cd with them: Three of the finest jazz musicians from the States, drummer Billy Hart, bass player Buster Williams and the 1996 Jazzpar Prize Winner, pianist Geri Allen.

On recordings from Vejle and Copenhagen the first-class quartet let themselves go with great and powerful playing in a generous atmosphere filled with high spirits and, not least, fiery, explosive Billy Hart at the drums. The live recordings reflect that there was ample time to fill the five chosen tunes with striking melody lines, physical and straightforward swing and sparkling improvisations.

We are in the company of jazz giants, and one might have feared that the Americans would knock the Danish sax player off his feet. But the hour of music now available makes it quite evident that Lars Møller's venture bore fruit and has turned into a great artistic triumph.

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STUCD 04032, STUNT RECORDS