

DINESEN • BESIAKOV • GÓMEZ • WAITS JAZZPAR 2004 • LADY WITH A SECRET

JAZZPAR is the prestigious Danish jazz prize. For 15 years, large sums have been awarded in celebration of a long list of jazz personalities. Each year's celebration includes a project allowing a Danish musician to form a group, choosing members from the international jazz scene. It is the kind of prize that dreams are made of.

Certainly, dreams have often come true, when Danish bandleaders have chosen the musicians for their JAZZPAR groups. Saxophonist Jakob Dinesen is no exception. He found a wonderful compromise between local and international talent for his JAZZPAR quartet, featuring his Danish colleague, pianist Ben Besiakov, and the two American stars, bassist Eddie Gómez and drummer Nasheet Waits.

37-year old Dinesen began playing sax at 16, studied at Berklee College of Music (1990-91) and is a graduate from The Rhythmic Conservatory in Copenhagen (1994-99). He has performed in countless bands with a long list of the most important Danish modern jazz players, but it was probably the trend-setting group Once Around The Park that tuned the ears of a wider audience to his extraordinary talent. The name of the band is borrowed from a tune by Paul Motian, whose music has been a great source of inspiration to Jakob, and with whom he (and guitarist Kurt Rosenwinkel) recorded AROUND (Stunt, 2000). One can meet Jakob and his music any place that has a door open to jazz and affiliated music – large venues, small clubs, you may even hear this enthusiastic musician on the street with one foot comfortably in post-bebop and the other in something that might be called 'modern-right-now'. "What makes all the difference, is open an open mind", says Dinesen. He has released several albums in his own name, and numerous as a featured sideman or co-bandleader.

Jakob's meeting with the American giants and his Danish soul-brother resulted in wild, unpredictable, beautiful and vigorous music, to which these recordings, from the JAZZPAR caravan's short concert tour, bear witness. The four musicians clearly worked for and with each other, and soon a tight combo with high ambitions emerged. This is modern jazz taken to the limit; to a place where the greatest chances are taken and the most intense moments occur. The JAZZPAR quartet was a challenge for Jakob Dinesen, but like all genuine jazz musicians, he loves a challenge. "They really pulled the carpet out from under my feet. Playing with musicians of their calibre opens up a whole new world. We were up against the wall, but that's the best way to learn."

49-year old Ben Besiakov is one of the important pianists on the Danish scene. He played his first professional gig at 13 at Copenhagen's legendary Jazzhouse Montmartre. Since then he has played with every one around, recorded several albums of his own and been a sideman on countless recording sessions.

Bassist Eddie Gómez was a child when his family moved from Puerto Rico to New York. He grew up to become a giant among modern bassists. Gómez played bass for Bill Evans for 11 years.

Born in New York in 1970, drummer Nasheet Waits is the youngest member of the band. He is one of the new shining stars of jazz drumming, drawing attention as a member of pianist Jason Moran's hip group. He also played with JAZZPAR prize winner Andrew Hill's ensemble on THE DAY THE WORLD STOOD STILL (Stunt).

A LADY WITH A SECRET is a live recording, and Jakob Dinesen deliberately chose the selections where the band goes out on a limb – and once in a while all the way over the edge. But these are also the most interesting selections; where the ante is highest. Genuine jazz musicians play without a safety net. They play in the present. And these recordings feature genuine, live jazz at its best. Go along for the ride – it's worth it.

**Dinesen/Besiakov/Gómez/Waits: The Jazzpar Project 2004, Lady With A Secret
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