

Caesar Frazier

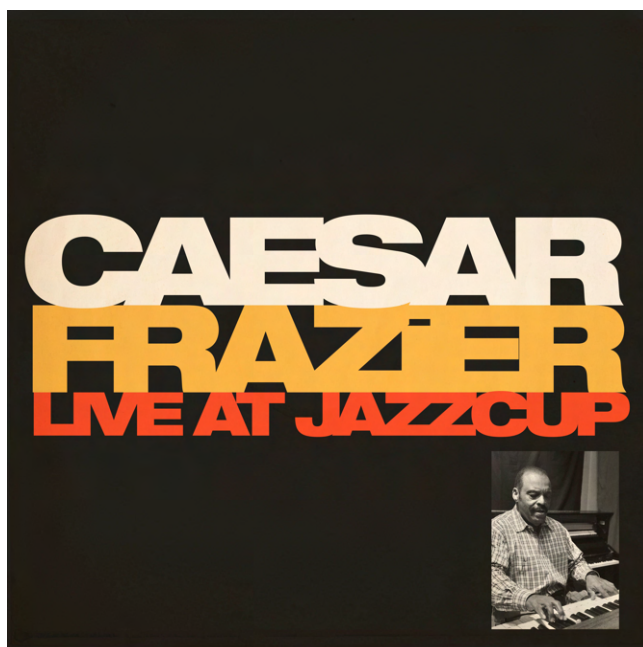
LIVE AT JAZZCUP

Released on CD, LP, and digital

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Jazz has always had its more or less "secret" personalities, legends even, who made significant and influential contributions to the genre without becoming household names. One such example is the brilliant organist Caesar Frazier. The road that brought him from Lake Helen in Florida to Copenhagen, Denmark, is long and winding. But throughout his historic career as one of the hardest-working artists in jazz and soul music, Frazier learned that if you want something done right, you have to do it your own way - and follow your own path. And that's just what he's done on his first live album, recorded in a club in the heart of Copenhagen on a warm weekend in November.

Now based in Florida, Caesar Frazier's solo career began as a funky soul jazz organist who recorded several albums as a leader in the 1970s and 80s, including HAIL CAESAR! with musicians otherwise associated with the Prestige label and its energetic brand of soul-jazz. Although the album was not an immediate hit, rappers later discovered the funky beats, screaming saxophones, sharp wah-wah guitars, conga drums, and Caesar Frazier's Hammond organ washing over everything in warm, rhythmic waves. The album is now a valuable rarity for collectors and enjoys cult status among vinyl freaks, thanks to sampling by Gang Starr, Common, Kanye West, and Arrested Development. Frazier reflects on the album's surprising second life long after its initial release: "We had talented musicians like Houston Person on tenor sax and Idris Muhammad on drums on board. But still, I never expected the album to become a classic. Indeed, today it's a rarity that people pay a lot of money for. I still get emails from people all over the world who want to buy it. But I've sold my own copies," says the organ king.



CD



LP

Frazier's career includes legendary stints with alto saxophonist Lou Donaldson's groups and even soul legend Marvin Gaye. He went on to record several more albums (including as a singer) but is still best known for his contributions as a sideman to stars in multiple genres.

Besides focusing on playing in local venues wherever he goes, Caesar's artistic output had quieted down a bit over the past decade-plus, but that changed with the releases of INSTINCT (2018), CLOSER TO THE TRUTH (2019), and TENACITY - AS WE SPEAK (2022). Suddenly, eyes and ears have once again found the organ icon. And now, on LIVE AT JAZZCUP, he demonstrates that he is a faithful guardian of the Hammond B3 grail and today is one of the few active original exponents of the instrument and its rich tradition.

The set includes well-loved familiar classics and standards such as *A Night In Tunisia*, *Willow Weep For Me*, *You Don't Know What Love Is* and *Jive*, as well as his own *King of Leone* and *Thieves In the Temple* by Prince - nine tracks in all. And Frazier, now a spirited 74-year-old, has never sounded better as he drives the music and the musicians with his potent playing on the Hammond B3.



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The organ is still an integral part of the jazz scene internationally, just like when a young Caesar first heard Jimmy Smith, whose insistent, rhythmic playing built bridges between jazz, soul, and blues. Smith was one of the artists whose songs got playtime on the jukebox in the all-black bar across the street from the farmhouse in rural Florida where he grew up. "Even then, I knew I wanted to play the organ and make people smile and dance," he says. "Every night when I would go to sleep, I would lay in my bed and listen to the music pouring in through my window from that juke joint over there. I listened to it all carefully. Even the gospel songs we sang in church and the country music played on the white radio stations. Today, I am deeply grateful that I had such a wide-ranging musical upbringing."

Caesar's recent releases have rekindled listeners' appreciation and fascination with the legendary organist. And it has brought him to Denmark, kick-starting the recording of the first live album in Caesar's long and iconic career. It was recorded with Danish drummer and producer Kresten Osgood (b. 1976), the young and talented Danish guitarist Johannes Wamberg (b. 1991), and Swedish tenor saxophonist Jonas Kullhammar (b. 1978).

Kresten Osgood defies all musical categorizations. He is a hungry and dedicated musician who always plays for the musical moment, whatever the context. His incredible career includes celebrated work as a rapper, composer, pianist, organist, vocalist, saxophonist, and trumpeter.

His musicality has brought him together with some of the greatest musical luminaries, including Billy Preston, Dr. Lonnie Smith, Sam Rivers, and Yusef Lateef. He has received numerous honors during his career and toured the world as a performer, and to describe his published body of work as vast would be an epic understatement.

Guitarist Johannes Wamberg is one of the brightest musical minds of his generation, casually bridging genres and elevating every musical moment to which he lends his sound and talent. Wamberg is equally at home in pop, rock, fusion, funk, and seemingly every sub-genre of jazz imaginable.

Saxophonist and composer Jonas Kullhammar has been one of Sweden's most celebrated musicians since his quartet's breakthrough in 1998. His discography now includes countless albums, and the list of awards, honors, and accolades he has received is far too long to list here.

Osgood, Wamberg, and Kullhammar make up three-quarters of the new Caesar Frazier Quartet. It's a compelling group offering exciting musical experiences to listeners drawn to vintage jazz and soul, with its span of generations and material. It's all held together and led fearlessly by one of the greatest heroes on his instrument.

Compelling stories come together on a live recording from a popular jazz venue in Copenhagen. The time is now - Hail Caesar!

**Caesar Frazier – Hammond B 3 / Jonas Kullhammar – tenor sax
/ Johannes Wamberg – guitar / Kresten Osgood – drums**

***Jive Samba / You Don't Know What Love Is / King of Leone / Thieves In the Temple / You've Changed
/ Night In Tunesia / 1-2-3 / I Wanna Make It with You / Willow Weep for Me***

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