

Phronesis 'We Are All' review BBC Music Magazine 2018

Jazz choice of the month.

The London-based Phronesis bring energy and inventiveness to the jazz piano trio.

Is there some arcane secret to the phenomenon that is Phronesis? After all, it's a piano trio playing originals, which is hardly a radical concept; indeed, it's often the runabout vehicle of choice for jazz composers, successful or aspiring, as demonstrated by the piles of calling-card CDs clogging the in-trays of promoters and journalists. This, however, may be where the explanation lies: Phronesis is exactly this, only better. Any piece by one of the group's members (each contributes two of six tracks on this, the band's eighth album) will contain more ideas than many artists can muster for an entire project, eschewing padding and repetition in favour of complex, energetic explorations that manage to be both wayward and utterly logical without lapsing into either anarchy or sterility. The musicians' exceptional technical skills are completely integrated into the fascinating twists and turns of the music, which echoes everything from Liszt to early Soft Machine via bebop while still being unique in its conviction and sheer depth of content. The warmth of the recorded sound rounds off an absolute and unreserved recommendation.

- Roger Thomas