



## Knut Riisnæs Quartet *2nd Thoughts*

Spoiler alert! This is a **JAZZ** album – and it **SWINGS**.

It's a very rare treat when a new **Knut Riisnæs** CD is released. Born into bop in 1945, he's appeared on an abundance of albums, but precious few under his own name.

A Scandinavian saxophone stalwart who has stated early influences as Charlie Parker, John Coltrane and Sonny Rollins, Knut has recorded and toured with such musicians as John Scofield, Jon Christensen, Red Holloway and Arild Andersen.

For those who think of Norwegian jazz music as only 'sonic landscape', poetic and minimalistic, **2nd Thoughts** comes as a realistic reminder that the country has very strong roots in bebop, with several musicians acknowledged worldwide. Knut is one of them, admired and revered by generations of jazz lovers.

Talking of generations, the album's pianist, **Anders Aarum** and bassist, **Jens Fossum** were born more than a generation on from Knut, but along with **Tom Olstad** (born in 1953) on drums, the band sound more like quadruplets! The interplay is seamless, as empathic as it gets. It's not a studio pick up session – it's a **BAND!**

On **2nd Thoughts** Knut Riisnæs with his very identifiable jazz vocabulary, plays exquisitely throughout. The title track is a Mulgrew Miller composition, a lovely blend of Afro-

Cuban and Swing. It's straight-ahead jazz with wonderfully flowing and fertile solos from Anders and Knut.

**Petite Prix** is an Aarum original with an energetic theme played in unison by piano and sax, which leads to compelling solos from both Anders and Knut.

In **She Was Too Good For Me**, a delicious Rodgers and Hart ballad, we're invited to Knut's inner sanctum. It's a stunning example of a maestro at work; his finely developed and passionate sound is moving. It's a track that will come to wear out my CD player.

All of the above also applies to the appropriately titled **Touching** (Knut's only composition on the album). The album closes with two live tracks recorded at Oslo Jazz shrine, Herr Nilsen (2016). **Liten Vals** is a charming piece in three time which surprisingly but gratifyingly opens with a bass solo. The finale is another superlatively played ballad, **Crazy She Calls Me**.

Long live jazz! Long live Knut Riisnæs!

*David Fishel*



## The band

**Anders Aarum** (piano) studied extensively at academies in both Norway and Sweden. In addition to producing and composing material on over 100 albums for other artists, he has released three solo CDs under his own name. He has worked with the likes of Sonny Simmons, Herb Geller, Jesper Thilo, Silje Nergaard, Leroy Jones, Roscoe Mitchell and Louis Stewart.

**Jens Fossum** (bass) studied at NTNU (jazz department) in Trondheim, Norway. He has a Masters degree in *Jazz Performance* from the University of Miami. He released his first solo album, *Bass Detector* in 2015 on the German label, *Ozella Records*. Jens was nominated for a Norwegian Grammy (Spellemannspris) with the Sigurd Køhn Quartet (2006) and the Fossum/Aarum Quartet (2008).

**Tom Olstad** (drums) has been playing professionally in on stages and in studios with trios and with orchestras since 1975. He has played/recorded with among others, Art Farmer, Kenny Drew, James Moody, John Surman and Karin Krog. He released a solo album, *Changes for Mingus* in 2007 (Poncha Jazz Records).

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