

Top review from the United States

Dr. Debra Jan Bibel TOP 1000 REVIEWER

★★★★★ Dusting Off and Polishing a Gem

Reviewed in the United States on April 2, 2021

With the Pandemic curtailing performances and recordings, saxophonist Mark Lewis considered reaching back to old recordings for possible remastering and issue. How fortunately he did so with his Rotterdam quartet, because the 30-year-old session is a gem. Born in Tacoma, Washington in 1958, Lewis developed his jazz art in Europe in 1978. He had two musical outlets: a world jazz quintet whose members were from India, West Africa, South America, and Holland, and his Dutch groups. He also established his own recording company, releasing works by Art Lande, David Friesen, and Philly Joe Jones. His Dutch quartet group on this album were pianist Willem Kühne, bassist James Long, and drummer Frans van Grinsven (who had a set of African drums). The music is mainstream, lyrical, and beautiful. The half-track recording, now refashioned, seems freshly minted. The attractive, vibrant leading track Moonflower leads to a 5/4 tropic groove on his alto saxophone. Ghost of a Chance is nicely balanced, with propulsive drumwork, piano expansion, and bass backing. The intense title work, Naked Animals follows a 12/8 meter and a West African dance flavor. Slowing down to the ballad, A Dance with Monique, Lewis switches to flute. The sweeping melancholy of the James Long solo is taken up by piano. The tender track is but one highlight of this very fine album. City Slicker shifts into urban blue mode and shadowy improvisations. 4-D is an adventure: upbeat and progressive, reaching. The concluding piece The Seven Angels is episodic in moods. The listener can decide which section hints of Michael, Gabriel, Uriel, Raphael, Selaphiel, Raguel, and Barachiel. The piece, excerpted from a ballet, starts sweet, saunters into chaos, visits a noir club, falls into a sinkhole, and emerges into warm sunshine. After 14 years, Lewis returned to the United States, settling in the Bay Area before moving back home to Washington state.



"I feel like I'm getting transported to a whole other auditory universe."

- Joe Dimino, Neon Jazz

Jazz Weekly

Creative Music and other forms of Avant Garde

REVIEWS, RINGER OF THE WEEK

\*\*\*\*RINGER OF THE WEEK\*\*\*\*Mark Lewis Quartet:

Naked Animals

by George W. Harris • June 10, 2021

Recorded 30 years ago on a "live" half track gig, Mark Lewis' then team of Willem Kühne/p, James Long/b and Frans van Grinsven/dr remind us of what a real gig sounded like, with a fresh set of originals in a post-bop style. His alto sax is Paul Desmond cool, deliciously bluesy on "Ghost of a Chance" and clean and clear as a morning sunrise through a window on the 5/4 "Mercurian Rendezvous". The rhythm team tap out a rich pulse on the Maiden Voyage-ish "Moonflower" and dig in under Lewis' flute during the title track, with Long and van Grinsven creating a glorious rivulet. Long delivers a warm and spacious line on "City Slicker" and the team cooks like a master chef on "4-D" before Lewis floats away like a cirrus cloud on "The Seven Angels". Was it really this easy?



the waltz, "Mercurian Rendezvous," builds energy on "Ghost of a Chance"... then explodes on the title track, also in three, as Lewis wails in the high register over rumbling bass and drums. The lovely ballad, "A Dance with Monique," shows off the luster of Lewis' flute sound, which includes a breathy little "catch" in the manner of Rahsaan Roland Kirk. "City Slicker" slows things back down. "4-D" features speedy walking bass and a couple of Pepperish clusters. The closer, "The Seven Angels" moves from a happy, pretty melody to a conversational, avant-ish double solo by alto and piano before coming home to the melody. Pianist Kühne is by turns lively and atmospheric, bassist Long plays with crisp vigor ... , and the always-supportive drummer van Grinsven creates an exciting skein of sound with Long's vamp on "Naked."

Before the pandemic, Lewis was performing regularly in Ballard. Hopefully, when it's over, he'll be playing some of this music there.

- Paul de Barros

EARSHOT JAZZ

Born in Tacoma in 1958 and raised on a farm outside Gig Harbor, reed man Mark Lewis began to make a name for himself locally as a quietly avant-garde player in the mid '70s. In 1978, he moved to Holland, where he stayed 14 years before returning to the Northwest. Naked Animals features tracks recorded in Holland in 1990 by one of Lewis' European bands, with Willem Kühne (piano), James Long (bass), and Frans van Grinsven (drums).

A distinctive original who doesn't play to traditionally choppy, chromatic bebop lines, Lewis hews alto with a light, golden sound and legato phrasing that occasionally recalls Paul Desmond or Art Pepper. He produces a full, robust, silvery tone from the flute. Naked Animals features eight tracks, all originals. It starts out low-key, with the pretty "Moonflower" and

New Issues

MARK LEWIS QUARTET NAKED ANIMALS AUDIO DADDIO RS1015

MOONFLOWER / MERCURIAN RENDEZVOUS/ GHOST OF A CHANCE/ NAKED ANIMALS/ A DANCE WITH MONIQUE/ CITY SLICKER/ 4-D /THE SEVEN ANGELS. 53:53.

Lewis, as, flt; Willem Kühne, p; James Long, b; Frans Van Grinsven, d. 3/11/1990. Rotterdam. Holland.

Talk about a long time coming. The saga behind these sounds from three decades ago is fully explained in the Notes From The Musicians so an abbreviated rundown should suffice. Washington State expatriate Lewis was based in the Netherlands when these eight tracks were recorded digital live half-track then sat in the vault until their release on the second of April of this year. What stunned this writer initially was how fresh these numbers fell upon one's ears. It is easy to recognize the kinetic tightness of this foursome stemming from their lengthy association. Lewis has scripted some clever charts for his liquid alto (his main axe) to navigate with a seeming preference for the higher register of the horn (like Paul Desmond, for instance) and an innate lyrical bent that makes one think of what Art Pepper might be sounding like if he was still with us. His other comrades are equally skillful most notably pianist Kühne who balances deft comping with rich solo work. His McCoy-shaded ride on the churning "4-D" is a highlight and bassman Long shines in an inventive spot on "City Slicker": This is no dusty diamond from the past but an unreleased gem that deserves to be placed side-by-side with The New York Session from 2017 with an all star rhythm section of George Cables, Essiet Essiet & Victor Lewis (Cadence Annual Edition 2017, page 291).

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Larry Hollis

ジャズの魂を揺さぶるマガジン

The Walker's

マーク・ルイス(as, fl), ウィルヘルム・キューネ(p).

ジェームス・ロング(b), フランス・ヴァン・グリンズヴェン(ds)

30年余の時を超えて陽の目を見た幻の作品

米国ワシントン州タコマ出身のベテランサクソフ奏者兼フルート奏者のマーク・ルイス。このアルバム『ネイキッド・アニマルズ』がレコーディングされたのは、今から30年余前の1990年。ウィルヘルム・キューネ、ジェームス・ロング、フランス・ヴァン・グリンズヴェンとのカルテットで8曲が収録されたが、当時マーク・ルイスがアメリカのリカレールと契約を結び、そのまま蔵入りのような状態になってしまった。1曲目の「ムーンフラワー」からマーク・ルイスのアルト・サクソフとフルートの音色が心地良く、カルテットで最初のメンバーとなったウィルヘルムのピアノも古臭さなど全く感じさせない。熟成されたワインのような30年余の時を超えて陽の目を見た幻の一品。

Translation from Japanese:

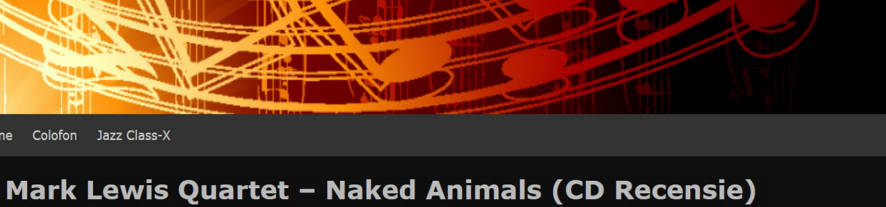
Phantom Work From More than 30 Years Ago

Veteran sax and flute player Mark Lewis is a native of Tacoma, Washington State in America. This album, Naked Animals, was recorded in 1990. Eight songs were recorded by the quartet with Willem Kühne, James Long and Frans van Grinsven. However at that time Mark Lewis was contracted to an American label and Naked Animals was forgotten for a long time. From the album's first song, "Moonflower," Mark Lewis' alto sax and flute sound heart-warming. Also, the quartet's first member Willem Kühne's piano doesn't feel at all stale even now. Like aged wine, after more than thirty years people now know how good it is.

(phantom meaning: something amazing that just appears)

NIEUWE NOTEN

Voor nieuwe en verrassende muziek



Home Colofon Jazz Class-X

Mark Lewis Quartet – Naked Animals (CD Recensie)

Gepubliceerd op 27 Juli 2021 door Ben Taffijn



Het Mark Lewis Quartet mag dan al bestaan sinds 1979, het is daarmee tevens één van de langst bestaande Nederlandse jazzbands, ik had er nog nooit van gehoord. Twee Amerikanen, die hier ooit zijn blijven hangen, saxofonist en fluitist Mark Lewis en bassist James Long en twee Nederlanders, pianist Willem Kühne en drummer Frans van Grinsven. Veel albums maakte het kwartet tot nu toe niet. Op Discogs vind ik alleen het uit 1988 stammende 'Spirits'. Dat er dan nu ineens nieuw materiaal ligt, mag een klein wonder heten. Alhoewel nieuw niet helemaal de lading dekt. Het kwartet gebruikte

de afgelopen tijd, zonder concerten, goed en stofte maar eens wat oud materiaal af, het resulteerde in het onlangs verschenen 'Naked Animals', met daarop nooit eerder uitgebrachte studio opnames uit 1990.

Het kwartet bestond in '79 uit Lewis, Kühne, drummer Pieter Henrard en bassist Bart Rademakers. Een eerste wissel zorgde ervoor dat Hein van de Geyn, Rademakers verving en Frans van Grinsven Henrard. Een derde wissel liet Long het stokje overnemen van Van de Geyn. Het is de bezetting die we op dit album horen en die nog steeds bestaat. Als alles goed gaat komt er eendaags nog een album met opnames van vlak voor de lockdown. Moorme oude foto's sieren het album, jonge honden waren het nog dertig jaar geleden, volledig in vorm daar in een studio in het Zeeuwse Vrouwenpolder waar de opnames werden gemaakt. We gaan met 'Moonflower' rustig en harmonieus van start. De melodie van Kühne klinkt puntig en aangenaam, de groove van Long en Van Grinsven stuwend en meeslepend en dan komt Lewis zelf in, hier op altsax, zeer melodieus, met een roemachtige klank. Dat melodieuze kenmerkt ook 'Mercurian Rendezvous', met veel souplesse beweegt Lewis zich hier door de noten, een verhalenverteller pur sang. Maar het is wellicht wel Long die hier het meest opvalt met zijn stevige groove.

Een album kortom met goed in het gehoor liggende stukken, met een duidelijke opbouw. Stukken die helemaal voldoen aan het etiket 'jazz'. Prachtig en zeer overtuigend gespeeld, gloedvol en met pit, zonder dat de melodie geweld wordt aangedaan. Hier geen overleefd solo's, gehuld in abstracties, maar hecht samenspel in dienst van de compositie. Ballade 'Ghost of Change' en het pittige titelstuk 'Naked Animals' getuigen er op boeiende wijze van evenals de twee eerder genoemde stukken. Kühne is daarbij net zo'n sfeermaker als Lewis, ze voelen elkaar perfect aan. Een hoogtepunt is overigens diens elektrificerende bijdrage aan dit 'Naked Animals'.



Mark Lewis nu, Foto: website Lewis

Een kleine metamorfose met het voorgaande is het zeer langzame 'A Dance with Monique', allereerst omdat we Lewis hier op fluit horen, ten tweede vanwege de moeie, zeer intieme bijdrage van Long, met zingende snaars. 'City Slicker' brengt de blues binnen, in een aangenaam, meeslepend laag tempo, waarna we in '4-D' weer opveren uit onze stoel, dankzij zijn pittige bijdrages van Lewis, Kühne en vooral van de ritmesectie. Afsluiter 'The Seven Angels' sluit hier op aan, een energiek album prachtig samenvattend.

Translation from Dutch:

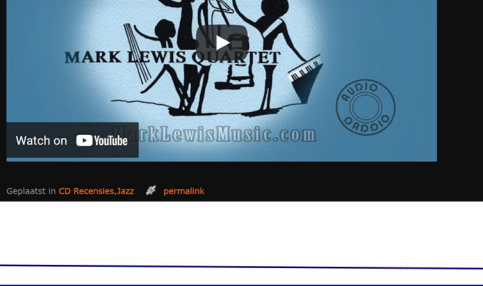
The Mark Lewis Quartet may have existed since 1979, but it is also one of the longest existing Dutch jazz bands, I had never heard of it. Two Americans who once lingered here, saxophonist and flutist Mark Lewis and bassist James Long and two Dutchmen, pianist Willem Kühne and drummer Frans van Grinsven. The quartet has not made many albums so far. On Discogs I only find the 'Spirits' dating from 1988. The fact that new material is suddenly present may be called a small miracle. Although new doesn't quite cover the load. The quartet used good and dusted off some old material recently, without concerns, resulting in the recently released 'Naked Animals', with never-before-released studio recordings from 1990.

In '79 the quartet consisted of Lewis, Kühne, drummer Pieter Henrard and bassist Bart Rademakers. A first change led to Hein van de Geyn replacing Rademakers and Frans van Grinsven Henrard. A third change allowed Long to take over from Van de Geyn. It's the line-up we hear on this album that still exists. If all goes well, there will be another album with recordings from just before the lockdown. Beautiful old photos adorn the album, young dogs were still thirty years ago, completely in shape there in a studio in the Zeeland Vrouwenpolder where the recordings were made. We start with 'Moonflower' quietly and harmoniously. Kühne's melody sounds pointed and pleasant, the groove of Long and Van Grinsven propulsive and compelling and then Lewis himself enters, here on alto sax, very melodic, with a creamy sound. That melodic also features 'Mercurian Rendezvous', with a lot of flexibility Lewis moves through the notes here, a storyteller to the utmost degree.

But it is perhaps Long who stands out most here with his sturdy groove. An album in short with well-heard pieces, with a clear structure. Pieces that fully comply with the label 'jazz'. Beautifully and very convincingly played, glowing and with spirit, without the melody being violated. Here no endless solos, shrouded in abstractions, but close interplay in the service of the composition. Ballad 'Ghost of Chance' and the racy title piece 'Naked Animals' testify to it in an engaging way as well as the two aforementioned pieces. Kühne is as much of an atmosphere maker as Lewis, they feel each other perfectly. A highlight is his electrifying contribution to this 'Naked Animals'.

A small break with the foregoing is the very slow 'A Dance with Monique', first of all because we hear Lewis here on flute, secondly because of the beautiful, very intimate contribution of Long, with singing strings. 'City Slicker' brings in the blues, at a pleasant, immersively slow pace, after which we spring up again from our seats in '4-D', thanks to finely spicy contributions from Lewis, Kühne and especially from the rhythm section. Closing 'The Seven Angels' fits in with this, an energetic album beautifully summed up.

Bekijk hier de introductie tot dit album:



O's Place JAZZ MAGAZINE

Lewis, Mark Audio Daddio, 2021, CD Instrument: Saxophone

Jazz Ruler Type: Bebop

O's Notes: Seattle-area native, saxophonist/flutist and composer Mark Lewis has come full circle now residing home and anxious to get back to regular live performances. Back in the 1980s when Mark lived in The Netherlands, he assembled a Dutch Quartet with Willem Kühne (p), James Long (b) and Frans van Grinsven (d). Naked Animals was recorded live over 30 years ago, one of Lewis' last recordings based in Rotterdam! It is only now being released and it is still fresh. There's an excellent bass solo on the soft, swinging ballad "A Dance with Monique". We also enjoyed the upbeat title track. But this album is a shared experience vs. showboating and a treasure from the time.

TAKE EFFECT

MARK LEWIS QUARTET

Audio Daddio, 2021

Listen to Naked Animals

A recording from way back in 1990, the saxophonist and flutist Mark Lewis uses his quartantine time to unearth this gem, where the post-bop quartet of James Long, Frans van Grinsven and Willem Kühne laid these tracks down in Holland, where Lewis resided for 14 years.

"Moonflower" opens the listen with Kühne's graceful keys as Lewis puts his sax on display in the very harmonic and breezy landscape, and "Mercurian Rendezvous" follows in 5/4 time with no shortage of grooves as frisky drumming from van Grinsven anchors the jazz climate.

At the halfway point, the title track emits much energy and beauty in its flowing, dynamic interaction, while "A Dance With Monique" lands in a calmer, romantic tone as Lewis' flute process illuminates the dreamy setting.

Approaching the end, "4-D" shuffles quickly, playfully and with plenty of dance friendly boogie fun, and "The Seven Angels" exits the listen with meticulous yet loose as each member takes their turn in the spotlight on the soulful and swinging finish that tips it hat to the blues.

Surprisingly, Naked Animals was recorded near the end of the quartet's time together, though they appear to be in sync like a band flourishing. Despite the recording being 31 years old, it's clearly aged very well and sounds as relevant today as it did in the '90s, and will likely radiate just as well 3 decades from now, too. - Tom Haugen



ANCIENT VICTORYS NEWS



MARK LEWIS Quartet: Naked Animals CD RS1015 Audio DaDDIO Mark-LewisMusic.com rhonda@marklewismusic.com

So we get to go back in time to Mach 11, 1990, for this live-to-digital half-track recording of Mark Lewis Quartet done in 1990.

The Netherlands, where Lewis lived for many years, toured, and recorded. Included is a lengthy history of the featured musicians in four pages of detailed notes. "Moon flower" starts with Willem Kühne's warm piano building bold with crisp percussion and light flute. Bass is an accent here with an improvisational voice. Song builds tension, speed, releases, and explores. This is a percussive ballad, building with heavy dynamics and space for musicians to explore. After the buildup of the song, the alto and warm full bass begin to develop a floating line. The support and interaction are superb. "Mercurian Rendezvous" starts with the alto over the rhythm section in warmth and expressive darts. Lewis develops and builds the mood as the piano rocks his dynamics with solid rhythmic accents from the drums and the bass beat in a full, driving, interweaving sound. Alto opens "Ghosts of Chance" with ballad runs and accents and brings us into the swirl of the music. Lewis almost talks in places with an accenting rhythmic mood. Love the piano lines developing, particularly a low-end jabbing. Kühne's alto is strong and builds in intensity, very expressive and shows major command of the keyboard. Title cut "Naked Animals" runs with the fervent piano, percussion accents, and moving bass clusters powering the piano and also into a frenzy of solos and extensions with some fever in the pulse and intensity. Great fun. A quiet loving flute opens "A Dance with Monique," leading the listener in, and slowly the Bass of James Long begins to escort the movement. Piano has melodic touches as the flute builds the beauty and extension. Bass solo is lyrical and definitively talking to the listener. Solo is backed by light piano but

Midwest Record Entertainment

Reviews, news, and views

3/16/21

AUDIO DADDIO MARK LEWIS QUARTET/Naked Animals: Not one to look back in anger, Lewis looks back at these 30 year old sessions, originally recorded near the end of his 14 year stay in Holland, with fondness. And rightfully so. Delightfully timeless and loaded with swing, he assembled a crew of local all stars and they kicked out the jams as one. With a welcome late night/after hours feel most of the way through, this is solid alone time jazz when all you want in the room is you and the record. Tasty stuff that was apparently made for the ages. (Audio Daddio 1015)

then left to build his big, warm sound. Best song to see that strong talent. Kühne's piano comes in soulfully while building masterful looks at the song's interior. Gorgeous over-nine-minute ballad. We really get to see why Lewis is such a respected jazz flautist. "City Slicker" is a stroll down the street with stops and music stays all with a bluff intent. We picture characters, facades, restaurants as Lewis' alto talks and calls out. The bass walks in big, full downtown sound. The cello piano rocks the pavement with the drums adding accents to make sure you don't miss anything in this warm full-bodied musical stroll. The bluesy, emotional piano is worth the price of admission. "4-D" features a dashing line, alto full and calling out, darting out to grab the ear. Lewis' finger is controlled and interesting. The rhythm section is solid, full and driving underneath. Lewis gets in some almost crying out and moves back into highly charged, quick lyrical note lines, great improvisation and never boring. His solo goes full bore through the entire first four minutes of the song. Kühne's piano attacks, highly lyrical, fast and full with bass and drums supporting with solid driving, interesting, intricate solo. Good trades with the diverse drum solos. The ballad "The Seven Angels" has Lewis on alto, warm and quietly talking and accents of the horn building the rhythm, and then the rhythm follows this slow, swinging beat. Nice reversal of roles. Lewis takes this bluesy ballad in a lyrical form with the rhythm more attacking and accenting. Piano makes an aggressive statement, then the alto talks lightly over that solo. Lots of interplay on this tune that lets everyone explore and even retreat into a quiet conversational exchange. Almost like talk building around a table between four folks. Fun, unpredictable, joyful, and very listenable and exploratory CD. Glad Lewis got this into the marketplace. Packaging is an 8-panel fold-over with intel box holder. The expressive title and silhouette of a quartet of figures on the cover works. Then there are three detailed, fairly small type notes on the musicians, one panel with a Lewis photo, a panel detailing the recording and its historic significance. One of the backside panels has pictures of all four players, and the back panel has players, instruments, song titles, times, and contact info. CD itself has title, tunes, running times, and contact info. Yes! Back binding had large clear labeling, best I have seen the last decade for easy shelf retrieval.

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