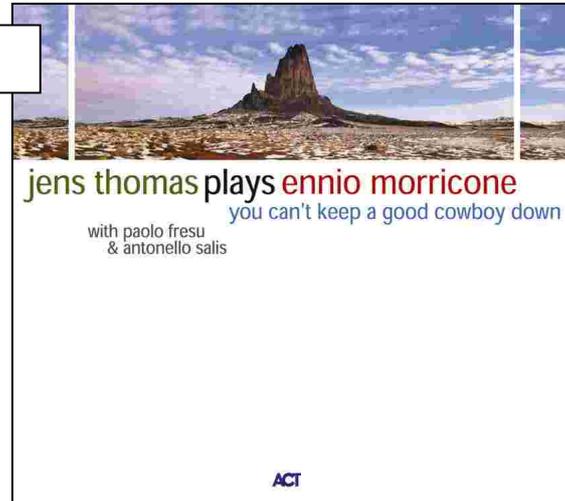


**ACT****JENS THOMAS****YOU CAN'T KEEP A GOOD COWBOY DOWN**  
**Jens Thomas plays Ennio Morricone****ACT 9273-2****Release date Germany: January 2000**

IC 07644



**Cologne's Stadtanzeiger newspaper calls Jens Thomas "The Jimi Hendrix of the piano".** Speaking of Thomas's solo CD *Endlich Allein* in his article in the Zeit newspaper's feuilleton section, Michael Naura marveled that Jens "didn't kowtow to the American superstars; instead, he developed a European format". With Jens Thomas's first album for ACT, *You Can't Keep a Good Cowboy Down*, Thomas focuses his unique personal creativity on the interpretation of the music of the great film composer Ennio Morricone.

**Jens Thomas was born in 1970 in Braunschweig, Germany.** He began studying classical piano at the age of six, and at the age of fifteen started playing in rock bands and experimenting with electronic keyboards. While most jazz pianists were nurtured on Monk, Bud Powell, and Herbie Hancock, Thomas's earliest influences were the Police, AC/DC, Schönberg, Ligeti and Wolfgang Rihm. In 1989 he discovered the world of jazz, and began to seriously explore its variant landscape. At 21 he began five years of jazz and classic music studies with Dieter Glawischnig at the Academy for Music and Theater in Hamburg. Jens had by this time co-founded the piano trio "Triocolor". In 1994 Triocolor won first prize at the EEC's European Jazz Contest. Thomas came away with the prize for best soloist. The following years were filled with tours throughout Germany, interspersed with tours of Turkey, Mexico, Cuba, and West Africa, and festivals in France, Belgium and Holland. The group, still in its original formation, remains active some nine years after its foundation. Jens Thomas currently regularly commutes between his home in Hannover and Berlin, since the possibilities of work are much greater in Germany's capital. Since January 1999 Jens has also been playing in duo with saxophonist Christof Lauer, whose album *Fragile Network* (ACT 9266-2) won the German Record Critic's Prize for best album in the jazz category. Thomas has also played with Carla Bley, Albert Mangelsdorff, Ed Schuller, Steve Swallow, Michael Gibbs, Gebhard Ullmann and Wolfgang Schlüter, and has received commissions for compositions from the NDR Big Band and the Festival for Young German Composers in Lisbon.

**Thomas says he approached Morricone's music not as some sharp analytical thinker,** but rather as someone who takes a good look at his own handicaps and influences and draws towards the music from an emotional standpoint. He let the Morricone themes swirl around in his head until he felt it was his own music playing in his mind. As a youngster, Thomas had seen Sergio Leone's monumental film, *Once Upon a Time in America*, and was struck by its pictorial power. It was only later that he became aware of how deeply the music had touched him, and how "unbelievably sentimental" it had made him. When Jens played or wrote a ballad, he would often feel the influence of Morricone's music. As Thomas was composing a piece for string quartet commissioned by the Goethe Institute in Lisbon, it was evident to him how much Morricone's style had bled into his own, especially in the slow passages of the composition.

**You Can't Keep a Good Cowboy Down contains some of Morricone's most important themes,** themes that God knows are not just simply background music for spaghetti Westerns. With an amazing feeling for musical images, with a loving rearranging of the rhythmic, harmonic, and melodic source, Thomas demonstrates how one can treat the material both freely and at the same time with respect. When Jens sent him a copy of the recording, Ennio Morricone reacted enthusiastically to the music. He wrote back, "The quality of your piano playing and improvisation is remarkable. Your fantasy and technique is on the highest level". Eight pieces are recorded in solo, at times accompanied by the ticking pendulum of a metronome. On four compositions Jens Thomas is accompanied by two important players in the Italian jazz scene: the Sardinian trumpeter Paolo Fresu and the accordion virtuoso Antonello Salis.

**Good film music must be able to exist without moving images flickering before the retina.** Jens Thomas creates music that plays in a film made for the inner eye. His visions merge in the mind of the listener.

**ACT****Jens Thomas****The CD:**

Jens Thomas - You Can't Keep A Good Cowboy Down - ACT 9273-2 - LC 07644

**Line Up:**

Jens Thomas (piano) mit \* Paolo Fresu (trumpet, flugelhorn), \*\* Antonello Salis (accordion)

**Tracks:**

1 Overture To You Can't Keep A Good Cowboy Down (Thomas) 2 The Man With The Harmonica \*,\*\* (Morricone) 3 The Good, The Bad And The Ugly (Morricone) 4 Cockeye's Song (Morricone) 5 Once Upon A Time In America \*,\*\* (Morricone) 6 Deborah's Theme (Morricone) 7 The Battle Of Laatzten (Thomas) 8 Once Upon A Time In The West (Morricone) 9 For Maestro Morricone \*,\*\* (Thomas) 10 Poverty (Morricone) 11 Pioggia\* (Thomas) 12 Here's To You (Morricone, Baez)

Recorded by Jan Erik Kongshaug July 26th, 1999, Rainbow Studios Oslo, Norway and Spike Streefkerk October 18th, 1999, Park Studios, Tutzing.

Mixed and mastered by Jan Erik Kongshaug.

Produced by Siegfried Loch.

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