

KARTET



Guillaume Orti, alto sax
Benoît Delbecq, piano
Hubert Dupont, double bass
Stéphane Galland, drums

« ...this quiet record is loaded with new-sounding purpose. The music is tense, detailed and well practiced [...] This is a great quartet with a well defined sound. [...] It's music that believes in itself, full of icy, beneficial tension. »

Ben Ratliff, *New York Times*, 2007

"Kartet makes a deliberate and beautiful brand of inside-out jazz...decidedly unconventional yet not harsh or taxing on the ear...Kartet flows seamlessly in and out of improvisations, and its arranged material shows harmonic daring and imagination." – Will Layman, PopMatters

It's seven years since Kartet's last release (*The Bay Window*, Songlines), but then this is a group that's been pacing itself for the long haul. Celebrating its 25th anniversary in 2014, Kartet retains its unique sound and approach while introducing some new elements – Belgian drummer Stéphane Galland (Aka Moon) replaces Chander Sardjoe, and C-Melody and F mezzo-soprano saxes supplement Guillaume Orti's alto sax. The album title by the way is a bi-lingual pun: in French, *grands laps* means "a long while". And the band's name? According to (prepared) pianist/recording supervisor Delbecq, "The letter K was a nod to Eastern European cultures and of course to Bela Bartok and his extraordinary imaginary folklore researches."

What makes Kartet special has perhaps best been expressed by the French critic Stéphane Ollivier: "...music in continuous metamorphosis as it pivots around the four players, and results in many simultaneous and complementary points of view on the same reality...a music which reconciles intellect and intuition as it combines a quasi-mathematical rigour with a sensitivity, an instrumental originality, and an attention to detail forged by the supreme exercise of total improvisation." Hubert

Dupont explains how the group develops new pieces: "The improvisations are very connected to the written material indeed, which is quite dense most of the time, with rhythmic games, melodic rules, colours, etc. It's just jazz! New compositions hopefully sound good and allow for all kinds of atmospheres, but they [also] contain the rules of the game for the collective improvisation. To make a good piece, the rules should be simple enough, but somehow different. We enjoy playgrounds, frames, in order to spontaneously organize together tension / resolution movements, suspended colours, illusions... it's a very funny game, with different results every time, it's exciting... We definitely remain surprising for each other – the suspense never ends, like, "What is he gonna do after THAT?"

Orti adds: "[Our compositions] work with strict and limited harmonic-melodic material, strongly connected with the rhythmic material. But the shape we can give to our melodic and rhythmic wanderings are unlimited... I personally try to bring interactive combinations that are somehow new for the band – what new playable situation can I ask my partners to take on? Strangely enough, I do have the impression we've always been playing about the same kind of music since the beginnings, but that originality, interplay, communication, etc. get more subtle and stronger with time." Delbecq expands on his own process: "For myself, any new rhythmic material is worth sitting down at the piano with, or tapping or juggling with, to enter into a specific knowledge of it. Imagination is like a muscle, and if you give it new ideas it can lead you to unexpected territories, which is what I'm looking for, because that's when the body ends up speaking first, the flow being given by the trained mind, ready to react like a spring."

And the effect on younger musicians, and on the audience? "We've been – and still are I think to a certain extent – a source of inspiration. Usually, the people who are passionate about Kartet also dig musicians like Steve Coleman, Steve Lehman, Andy Milne, Ralph Alessi, Tyshawn Sorey, Craig Taborn, Tim Berne... to name a few greats who are constantly searching for newer shapes, a mixture of control and freedom. [Yet] there are not that many bands on the scene that really experiment with these kinds of forms. We might be considered as living in an enclave but I consider that a ransom for creativity. Our music is not docile, it doesn't answer a market demand or anything, it is music that's sincere in its primary direction: find a collective sound, develop our own way to play and build music in a collective way, bring the listener into a state of dream, of trance. That's what the audience receives when they attend our concerts, there is some magic going on."

<http://www.ultrabolic.com/kartet>

THE MUSICIANS

Guillaume ORTI > saxophone, composition

Born in 1969, based in Paris since 1989, he is as well-known for his instrument playing as for his modern approach to improvisation. He was a member of Hask Collective and he performs with the following bands: Kartet, Bo Van Der Werf's Octurn (Brussels), Laurent Blondiau's Maak, and their show "Kojo" with the Anagoko family from Benin ; Andy Emler's Megaoctet, ...

In the duet Reverse, he explores improvisation in interaction with the computer of Olivier Sens. He led the European Saxophone Ensemble in 2012 and 2013. He collaborates regularly in choregraphic or improvised dance projects with dancers such as Thierry Bae, Olivier Gelpe, Catherine Contour, Françoise Tessier, le groupe du 22 mai, Rosas, etc.

He works with the author Ghislain Mugneret on the relationship between text and music, especially for the duet A Measure by Christine Bertocchi and Éric Chalan. We have also seen and heard him play in Marc Ducret's Seven Songs, Joachim Kühn, Gilles Coronado's Urban Mood, Hubert Dupont's Altissimo, Franck Carlberg, or in Nato's productions. He has also played with Aka Moon, Noël Akchoté, Aldo Romano, Thierry Madiot, Malo Vallois, Sylvain Kassap, Hélène Labarrière, Christophe Marguet, Pepa Paivinen (FI), ...

<http://www.guillaumeorti.com>

Hubert DUPONT > double bass, composition

Hubert Dupont explores the secret and tortuous paths of creative music - improvised or premeditated - with passion...

Hubert Dupont is the double bass player of KARTET since 1990, and the electric bass player of THÔT, Stéphane Payen's band ; in the 1990s he co-founded Collectif HASK, he led the bands ALTISSIMO, and DECOR.

His double-bass solo CD Ultraboles (UBR 0501) was named "Revelation 2005" in Guitarist-bass, and followed by many performances.

He led Dupont T, inviting Rudreh Mahanthappa, with Yvan Robilliard and Chander Sardjoe : the CD Spider's Dance (2007, UBR 0502, dist. Nocturne) is followed by tours in France, in the US and Canada ; performs with Sawadu, a trio with Hervé Samb (Guitar, Senegal) and Brice Wassy (drums, Cameroon) ; initiates Jasmim en 2012 (with Naïssam Jalal, Denis Guivarc'h, Nelson Veras, Youssef Hbeisch) and, in 2013, VoxXL (with Mike Ladd, Ibrahima Diassé,...)

His musical experience is strongly oriented towards musical research as well as receptivity to new forms : from formal constraints to total improvisation ; from pure acoustic to pure electronic (Nigma-e, performances with Tom Mays on digital instruments) ... Since 2000 he has been performing or recording with HATI, Nicolas GENEST's band ; with the Cameroonian master drummer Brice WASSY's Kù Jazz Groove ; Pierre Vaiana's Al Funduq ; Marjolaine Reymond ; the Lebanon pianist Elie Maalouf, the percussionist Youssef Hbeisch ...

<http://www.hubertdupont.com>

Benoît DELBECQ > piano, prepared piano, composition

His albums Sixth Jump (with J-J. Avenel and Emile Biayenda) and Circles and Caligrams (solo) have been awarded le Grand Prix du Disque de l'Académie Charles Cros in 2010. He also recorded for Songlines a double-trio with Fred Hersch, and a duet with Andy Milne.

Benoît Delbecq first appeared on the national then international scene in the early 1990's, and since then has continued to assert his original musical identity, notably as a member of the bands Kartet, The Recyclers, PianoBook, Ambitronix, Les Amants de Juliette, or with his own quintets with Steve Argüelles, Michael Moore, François Houle, Jean-Jacques Avenel, Mark Helias, Marc Turner, Emile Biayenda, Oone Van Geel ... or Pool Players, with Arve Enriksen... or The Silencers... Evan Parker... or with the author Olivier Cadiot, the singer Katerine. An enthusiast of prepared piano and electronic instruments, he is continually renewing his experimentations, which are a mixture of composition and improvisation, while at the same time performing as a much-in-demand sideman (Marc Ducret, etc.)

His playing displays a rich palette of sounds with multiple layers of colours, fleeting phrasing and harmonies. An enthusiast of poly-speeds, as early as 1989, he began researching into the keyboard's poly-rhythmic potential. He plays short rhythmic patterns intertwined with and animated by multiple simultaneous speeds, which evoke African traditional music (balafons, sanza...) as well as Asian (gamelans, gongs...). With his electronic instruments, he likes sounds composed by programming or samples recycling as well as entrancing bass lines played on Bass Station.

<http://www.delbecq.net>

Stéphane GALLAND > drums

Born in 1969, Stéphane Galland is an unconventional rhythm wizard. He is a member of the highly innovative trio Aka Moon (with Fabrizio Cassol and Michel Hatzigeorgiou), a major group in the new European jazz scene. Aka Moon has encountered the music of the Pygmées in central Africa, collaborated with Indian musicians, such as U. Sivaraman, as well as Doudou Ndiaye Rose in Senegal... This outstanding trio also performed with David Linx, Pierre Van Dormael, David Gilmore, the Ictus Ensemble ...

Stéphane Galland also collaborated with such legends as Joe Zawwinul - and many others.

He is the leader of the Lobi project (with Magic Malik, Carlos Benavent, Tigran Hamasyan,...)

<http://stephanegallanddrum.free.fr/>

DISCOGRAPHY



Kartet "Hask"

1991 - (Reissued by Hask / CD ADDA sold out)



Pression

1995 - CD Deux Z ZZ84118, dist. Harmonia Mundi



Jellyfishing

1999 - CD Pee Wee 025
Produced by Vincent Mahey and Kartet



Jyväskylä

2001 - CD Naïve
Produced by Hask



The Bay Window

2007 - CD Songlines
Co-prod : Ultrabolic



"Choc" year 2007



Grand Laps

2014 - CD Songlines
Co-prod : Ultrabolic



"Choc" year 2014

KARTET IN A FEW DATES

1991 : First album released, " HASK " (Adda, sold out).

1992 : Concerts with Steve Lacy (Sons d'Hiver Festival), with Glenn Ferris (Les Arcades)
Since 1992, more and more concerts : big festivals and all kind of stages in France, Swiss and Holland too... The trade press starts to be aware of the originality of the music, group cohesion and its new importance on the European scene to come.

1994 : KARTET is selected for the " Jeunes Affiches " SACEM.

1995 : Second album released : *Pression* (2Z 84118, Harmonia Mundi).

1996 : Chander Sardjoe replaces Benjamin Henocq at drums

1997 : Concerts in France, tour in Canada of Hask Quartet (Orti, Delbecq, Dupont, Argüelles) (June), tour in Italy (July)

1998 : Concerts in France, tour in Finland (November)

1999 : Kartet celebrates its 10 years old

Reissuing of the CD *Hask* that was sold out. *Jellyfishing* is released by Pee Wee.

All the KARTET's members are teaching : instruments, workshop of jazz and improvisation, composition, courses with associations, universities and conservatories.

2000 –2001 : Tour in Finland (25 dates & masterclass), Sweden...
Jyväskylä is released by Naïve

2002 : Tour with Thôt with the « Fédération des Scènes de Jazz »

2005 : Tour in Canada (June and July 2005).

2006 : Creation of the new répertoire and recording of the 5th album with Songlines

2007 : Jazz à La Villette Festival (September)

2008 : Jazz Festival at fort Napoléon (July)

2009 : Sons D'hiver Festival (April)

2010 : Tour in Bourgogne, 4 dates (January), the KVS, Brussels (June), creative residency of the new show « Kartet : 20 years » at Montreuil's Conservatory (October), concert at the Péricope

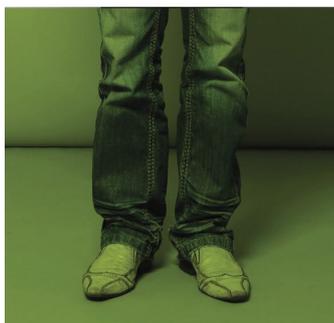
2010 – 2011 : creation « Kartet : 20 years » at Montreuil the 3rd of December, at Bobigny the 15th of January, tour : the 10th of December at the Pannonica (Nantes), the 14th of January at the Mandala (Toulouse), the 21st of January at the Petit Fauchoux (Tours), the 5th of February at Malakoff's Conservator, concert at Radio France for « Jazz sur le Vif » the 21st of May

2014 : the 6th album is released: *Grand Laps*

PRESS ARTICLES (IN ENGLISH) ABOUT THE LAST ALBUM

"A spellbinding voyage"
All about Jazz, March 2014

"Melody and rythm... The perfect storm."
Critical Jazz, February 2014



Kartet is a Parisian quartet with a long history of live performance and a discography including several albums of dense, cerebral albums of highly composed and technical jazz.

The melodies on "Grand Laps" are about as unpredictable, labyrinthine and complex as possible, undoubtedly the product of composers and musicians pushing themselves into uncharted realms of illogic in which no player could feel comfortable. There's a disciplined and practiced feel to all of the music, suggesting the musicians hold the view that these odd ideas could only be allowed to properly their meaning if executed with deft precision, and thought given to where the accents must be placed, even within the strangest structures. It's a more subtlety oriented and dynamic form of technical music than a lot of the musicianship driven metal these days.

I've had similar moments listening to Ornette Coleman or Eric Dolphy as I do with this album, feeling flabbergasted as an impossibly bizarre 13 bar figure begins to repeat for the second time, thinking first "how could that melody have been composed, and not improvised...?" and next "THAT is the head melody!?". This album doesn't exactly have head melodies, eschewing classic structure, and being generally less improvisatory than any hard bop or 60's jazz, opting instead to pack a lot of complex parts within a shorter span.

Like Dolphy and Coleman, however, Kartet toys with the verbatim repetition of meandering, oddly structured sections, thankfully allowing their details to be more easily processed, in my case. That said, this is most definitely an album you'll have to play several times to get much out of. The flipside to this is that nothing on the album will ever be fully processed, and thus couldn't ever become boring.

The smoky smooth tones of the players' instruments add a lot of expression and sweet musicality to the openly daunting sensibilities of the compositions. It might also be said that the musicians have a preference for oddness, particular in the rhythmic sense, but not abrasion or dissonance. The first track "XY" begins as a gamelan-esque polyrhythm and droning chime-like piano, but atop this, a wistful, descending saxophone lead is placed, which wouldn't likely offend many ears.

By the 2nd tune, titled "X", we get a taste of the album's wantonly disorienting side, starting with a saxophone melody containing so many drastic leaps in pitch I doubt anyone could associate it with a chord or scale, and solos that increase the density of notes to shredding levels. Pieces like this could be described as musical descriptions of anxiety or hurry, and give the listener few examples of satisfying symmetry or resolution. The slower section near the end of the track is inexplicable enough that it could hardly be said to be less disorienting.

Some will certainly be irritated by the band's constant refusal to meet expectations or provide the loungey flow and atmosphere of jazz. Kartet knowingly plays with these ideas, particularly in a track called "You Dig", which takes traditional jazz ballad piano chords and spaces them at odd intervals, sometimes with uncomfortable silence between. Dancing the tempo up and down, spidery drum files from the drummer succeed in extrapolating any conventional aspects of the structure into the equivalent of a fractured mirror. It's simply not music that exudes bliss or relaxation, instead seeming nervous, and equally suspicious of both beauty and ugliness. At its best, the band fully draws me into a groove I would not have thought existed.

Worthy of note is the aggressive, crystal clear 'pluck' of Hubert Dupont's impressively dextrous string bass playing. With constant note-heavy runs up and down the scale, he may actually be the most active member of the band, and runs completely contrary to every stereotype of his instrument. As many notes as he plays, there is no rattle or string noise, it's all perfectly smooth.

Though it will undoubtedly be infuriating for some, Kartet's "Grand Laps" is a marvellously deep record, and about the most perfect brain food any fan of technical music could want. Considering the extreme density of the music, this hour long album contains a massive amount of material. This is also further evidence that Song Lines is a truly remarkable label, as this is just one of a string of recent releases to rank among the best jazz I've ever heard in my life, also including Michael Blake's "In the Grand Scheme of Things" and Peter Epstein Quartet's "Polarities".

NEW YORK CITY JAZZ RECORD



Grand Laps
Kartet (Songlines)
by Ken Waxman

Pianist Benoit Delbecq turns up in North America as frequently as in his native France but this session reunites him with the Paris-based Kartet quartet with which he has been playing for 25 years. The band's seventh CD is its first in seven years but sounds as if the bandmembers hadn't been apart for a nanosecond.

While Delbecq, saxophonist Guillaume Orti and bassist Hubert Dupont are originals, Belgian drummer Stéphane Galland is new. Still, his contributions don't upset the group ethos any more than Joe Morello did when he joined the Dave Brubeck Quartet. That group is an apt comparison; Orti possesses an unflappable lyrical style, divided among alto, soprano and C-melody saxophones, reminiscent of Paul Desmond.

Kartet's watchwords are melodic interactions and, with each original member contributing compositions, there's a recognizable sound philosophy. In a program beginning with Orti's tricky and comprehensive "XY" and "X" and ending with his "XYZ", compositional linkage is underlined by four-square stops from the bassist plus the pianist's high-intensity chording. Agitation reaches a point of tension-release at the end of "XYZ" as Delbecq's staccato pacing meets Galland's cymbal clanks. The pianist's clipping in the tune's penultimate moments suggest a motif related to his plucked internal strings on "XY".

The foursome follow one another throughout the pieces' twists and turns. Depending on the horn, Orti can work his way up the scale with a tone that is gracefully smooth, as on "Gazzell", or narrow his tone to sourness on "Corps Chromé". Mostly, though, the program confirms its straightforward concentricity; see how Kartet handles "Red House in Nola". No pseudo-New Orleans-Louisiana-romp, the tune is taken formally, with emphasis on the melody line played by piano and drums, until Dupont breaks ranks with a slippery solo.

This CD is Lucky Seven for both band and listener.

For more information, visit songlines.com. Delbecq is at David Rubenstein Atrium Oct. 16th with Andy Milne. See Calendar.

improvised

A blog about all things concerning jazz and improvised music.

Sunday, April 13, 2014

Kartet - Grand Laps



Kartet
Grand Laps
Songlines

Guillaume Orti - Saxophones
Benoit Delbecq - Piano
Hubert Dupont - Acoustic Bass
Stephane Galland - Drums

Kartet is a group operating somewhere in the intersection of avant-garde, mainstream and chamber jazz. I was not familiar with them before *Grand Laps* (French for "a long while"), but as it turns out the group began 25 years ago and this is their sixth album, although it's been seven years since their previous release.

Even though the line-up is that of a classic jazz quartet, this is not a horn-with-rhythm section album; it's more egalitarian in design. The music on *Grand Laps* generally unfolds at an unhurried pace, and the structures the group use emphasize dialog, not blazing displays of virtuosity. At some points I was reminded of Miles' second quintet in their more introspective moments. There's an MBase influence lurking as well in the angular nature of some of the compositions.

The most distinctive element of Kartet's sound is owed to the presence of pianist Benoit Delbecq. His percussive style is immediately recognizable, and goes the furthest to define the group's identity. Delbecq also shows his impressionistic side, with a wonderful blend of lyrically abstract playing.

Guillaume Orti primarily plays alto, with a tone that's a little thin in the upper register for my taste, as well as C-Melody and soprano saxes. He gives the music plenty of breathing room, although at times I wanted more direction from him to propel the music forward. Dupont does a nice job of providing support when needed while adding his own commentary. Galland, who replaces original Kartet drummer Chandler Sardjoe, implies the rhythmic structures with his shading, but turns up the intensity when required.

Kartet does a good job of integrating composed and improvised sections so that each flows easily into the other. The music on *Grand Laps* is challenging to the listener, but has a lyrical, attractive quality that is unexpected. A late night avant-garde album, perhaps?

Here's a video on the making of the album:



[KARTET - GRAND LAPS from Igor Juget on Vimeo.](#)

Posted by Craig Premo at 12:19 PM 
Labels: Benoit Delbecq, Kartet, Songlines

CD/LP/Track Review

Kartet: Grand Laps (2014)

By [GLENN ASTARITA](#), Published: March 21, 2014

Track review of "Pass Pass"

Kartet celebrates its 25th anniversary and with the latest rendition, Belgian drummer Stephane Galland replaces Chander Sardjoe and alto saxophonist Guillaume Orti adds the C-Melody and F mezzo-soprano saxophones to his arsenal. Indeed, it's a unique entity. With the ambiance of chamber music fare and uncluttered designs, the musicians generate a rhythmic nirvana via geometrically modeled ostinatos and odd-metered time signatures, while also using space as a vantage point. From a holistic perception, the soloists engineer themes that feature reverse linear progressions, or something to that effect. Hence, it's a primary source of interest because the core thematic statements could be hummed in reverse and still makes perfect sense, akin to reversible outerwear that looks good in both colors and patterns.



Pianist [Benoit Delbecq](#) and bassist [Hubert Dupont](#) launch a commanding up-tempo ostinato with Galland's buoyant pulse on "Pass Pass." Orti chimes in as the band executes angular unison choruses. But Dupont atomizes and reformulates the primary motif during his extended bass solo, serving as a rite of passage moving forward. The saxophonist's exploratory solo is given some oomph due to Galland's sweeping and crackling beats as the quartet restructures the core melody atop undulating currents and slowly winds it down for the finale. Hence, the rhythmic outline of the album and the artists' engagingly hip presentation casts a spellbinding voyage, enabling one's imagination to run amok. Count *Grand Laps* as an early contender for top honors in 2014.

Personnel: [Guillaume Orti](#): saxophones; [Benoit Delbecq](#): piano; [Hubert Dupont](#): bass; [Stephane Galland](#): drums.

Record Label: [Songlines Recordings](#)

Style: [Modern Jazz](#)

SONGLINES

KARTET/Grand Laps: Songlines seems to have staked out a jazz spot to the left of ECM, a point well driven home by this chamber jazz crew's 7th album in 25 years. A step above minimalist jazz, this stuff is for the committed egghead jazzbo that you can always find in the corner of a Sunday recital with one leg crossed over the other and his head nodding appreciatively to some beat only he hears. Yep, this stuff is that deep. Not to be confused with usual arts council music, this music had the blood that comes with elbowing your way in the commercial world with something different. This is a sure thing for fans of new, as opposed to nu, jazz, continually looking for the next limit to test.
1605

Midwest records

TECHNICAL RIDER - KARTET

(sax - piano - double-bass - drums)

Purchaser shall provide the following band equipment at his sole expense and at no cost to the ARTIST. This technical rider is a part of the contract. Adaptations and equivalences are possible, please contact us.

INSTRUMENTS - BACKLINE

- 1 grand piano, tuned on the day to 440. (Preferred : Steinway B211). Tuning after the soundcheck is welcome.
- 1 jazz drum kit :
 - bass drum 18 or 20
 - toms 10, 12, 14, snare drum 14, white drumheads
 - pedals, low stool, 3 cymbal stands
 - a carpet (2m x 3m)
- 1 bass amplifier : GallienKrueger, Ashdown, SWR, ... + cabinet 4 x 10'
- 1 high stool
- 3 lighted music-stands
- cotton towels, bottles of water

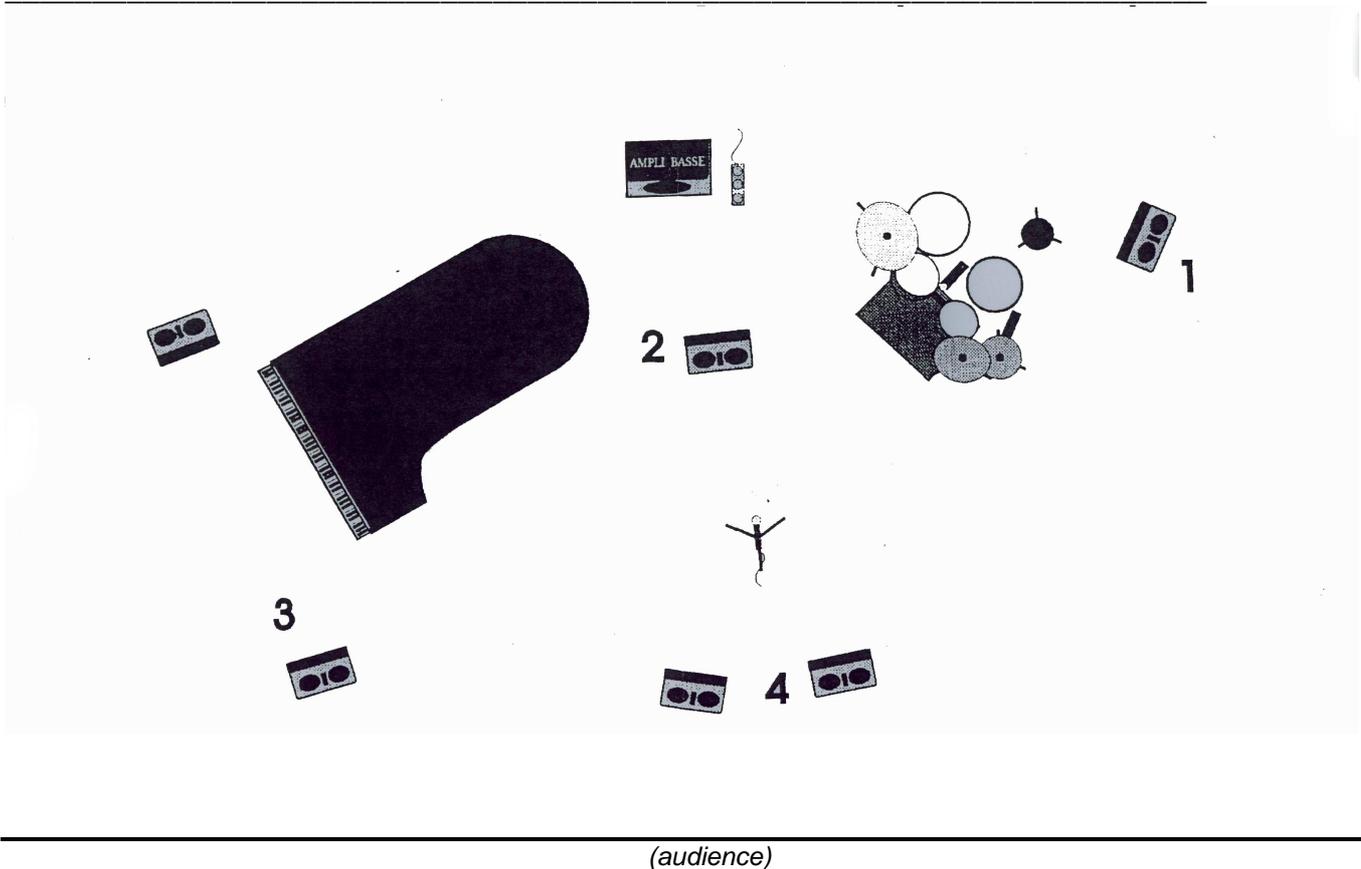
PATCH

Inputs	Sources	Captation	Stand
	Alto sax	C414, TLM103	
	Piano L	C414, Km84	
	Piano R	C414, Km84	
	Piano Dynamic	Sm57, M88	
	Double-Bass, Gage pick-up	DI	
	Double-Bass, piezzo pick-up	DI	
	Double-Bass, Shure Beta98 on bridge	Beta 98, ATM35	
	BD	M88, B52	
	SD up	Sm57	
	SD down	Sm57, Km84	
	HH	Sm57, E604	
	TOM1	Sm57, E604	
	TOM2	Sm57, E604	
	TOM3	Sm57, E604	
	TOM4	Sm57, E604	
	O/H L	Km84, Schoeps, Sm81	
	O/H R	Km84, Schoeps, Sm81	
	Talking mic.	Sm58	

MONITORS

5 stage monitors, connected to 5 separate outputs.

STAGE PLOT



HOSPITALITY - DRESSING ROOM

There must be dressing room available for the musicians next to the stage on the same floor as the stage.

In the dressing room :
wash basin with hot water.
5 towels

- bottles of water (still and sparkling)
- hot coffee
- juice
- beer
- white or red wine
- sandwiches, small snacks, fruits, nuts