
The @-Quartet



The @-quartet (pronounce “at quartet” as in an email address; a wink to his second job) was created by its leader, Didier Verna (guitars, composition), with as a founding principle a fierce desire never to be locked into a particular style. At the risk of paraphrasing Michel Petrucciani, the @ -quartet, “is this rude guest who tries to sit at all the tables”...

Mainly “@-coustic” (second meaning of its name), the band’s repertoire, constituted of original compositions exclusively, demonstrates the very broad extent of the musical influences of its founder. Ternary rhythms with varied tempos rub shoulders with ballads, themselves flirting with Latin and Caribbean moods, and that is when the whole thing doesn’t turn “free”.

In addition to all these tables at which the repertoire sits shamelessly, it is also the sound palette of the group, deeply cross-border, which makes its specificity. Beyond a classical rhythmic section (piano, double bass, drums), Didier Verna paints, in some way, soundscapes that are specific to each piece, by using many guitars with different sounds (this is his completely assumed “geek” side): electric, electro-acoustic, fretless, synth-guitar, sitar, <i>etc.</i> Finally, the orchestration is occasionally embellished with special guests (vocals, steel drums) which come to complete (or, should we say, sign) the “universal declaration of non-compliance” which constitutes the only official rule of this ensemble.

But we are more than the sum of our influences. The very large sound, rhythmic, harmonic, and melodic diversity of the repertoire does not in any way affect its consistency, as the character of its leader is so strong, in terms of composition as well as improvisation. Besides, by enlisting the best rhythm section one could hope for, Didier Verna also wanted to let the music express itself. To impose only a few things and let the personality of each musician flourish, allows a music to emerge, which is not necessarily the one that was originally expected.

Didier Verna (Guitars, Composition)

Born in 1970 in Bordeaux, he begins music at the age of 5, studies theory at the conservatory, classical percussions, classical piano, then classical, folk, and eventually Jazz guitar with guitarist **Denis Gouzil**.

After moving to Paris at the age of 21 in order to complete his scientific studies, he now pursues his musical career (guitarist, singer, and composer) in parallel with that of a professor of computer science (and also that of an Aikido teacher).

In 2001, he meets pianist **Thierry Lalo** with whom he creates a piano / vocals duet, and joins the **Voice Messengers**, a world-renowned vocal Jazz big band, in which he sings as a tenor.

In 2006, he founds the “@-quartet” with **Laurent Epstein** on piano, **Yoni Zelnik** on double bass, and **David Georgelet** on drums; a band which he equips with a repertoire of original compositions, and with which he has released three albums: “@-quartet”, “Roots and Leaves”, and “¡En Seguida!”.

Today, he also serves as an occasional presenter for Jean-Philippe Doret's Opus Jazzis radio show on IDFM 98.0 (Radio Enghien).

He has also played, among others, with important personalities of contemporary Jazz, such as **Antoine Hervé, Glenn Ferris, Guillaume Naud, Gilles Naturel, François Laudet, Andréa Michelutti, Déborah Tanguy, Sonia Cat-Berro, etc.**

Laurent Epstein (Piano)

Born in Strasbourg in 1964, he moves to Paris in 1992, where he quickly becomes one of the most solicited pianists on the Jazz scene, thanks to his swing and his sense for improvisation.

He performed at the most important Jazz clubs and festivals, both in France and around the world, with repertoires of standards as much as of personal compositions. He can be heard in his own formations as well as with many great names of Jazz, such as **Rachel Gould, Angelo Debarre, Jean-Loup Longnon, and Patrick Saussois.**

Notable bands with which he performed these last years include his own trio with Yoni Zelnik and David Georgelet, **Sébastien Giniaux's** Django53 quartet, the **William Brunard** quartet, **François Laudet's** quintet, and **Hervé Meschinet's** quartet.

While being primarily involved in the Jazz scene, his musical eclectism has allowed him to be also present in other artistic universes: theater, French chanson tradition, poetry...

Yoni Zelnik (Double Bass)

Born in Israel in 1975, he begins music at teenage by playing electric bass in a rock band. Later on, he discovers Jazz and moves to Paris in 1995 to study the double bass at the CIM and the 15th district conservatory. Today, he is one of the most active bass players on the french and international Jazz scene.

He has participated in more than 70 albums (with **Youn Sun Nah, Géraldine Laurent, Yonathan Avishai...**) and tours all over the world in the most prestigious festivals and clubs (North Sea Jazz Festival, Lincoln Center, Tokyo Jazz Festival...), notably with trumpet player **Avishai Cohen.**

Recent collaborations include **Sophie Alour, Laurent Coq, Sam Sadigursky, Sandro Zerafa, Robin Nicaise, Frank Woeste, David Prez, David Doruzka, Dave Douglas, Billy Hart, Aaron Goldberg, Walter Smith, Nasheet Waits, Ben Wendel, Johnathan Blake, Anat Cohen, Jeff Ballard, Leon Parker, Mark Guilliana, David Binney, Kendrick Scott, Jason Lindner, Justin Brown, Gregory Hutchinson, Yotam Silberstein...**

David Georgelet (Batterie)

Born in 1976, he begins the drums at the age of 10, joins the Jazz class at the Niort conservatory in 1992, and follows the teaching of Goerges Packzinski at the CIM in 1995, in parallel with sound engineering studies.

He collaborates with singer **You Sun Nah** for 10 years, records 3 albums, and tours all over the world with her.

In 2004, he goes to Brazil and records with **Sandro Zérafa**, **Nico Gori**, and **Max Pinto**. He also starts to collaborate with pianist **Florian Pellissier**.

In 2008, he founds Akalé Wubé (ethio Jazz), a band with which he records 4 albums, including the last one, in 2016, with singer **Girma Bèyèné** (Éthiopiennes vol. 30).

In the last 10 years, he has played and recorded notably with **Manu Dibango**, **Chico Buarque**, **Cheick Tidiane Seck**, **Di Melo**, **Mahmoud Ahmed**, **Déodato**, **Tchavolo Schmitt & Samy Daus-sat**, **Paname swing**, **François Chesnel**, the **Nagual Orchestra**, **Olivier Cahours**, **Lila Tamazit** trio, **Zurca** . . .

He has also participated in several film scores with composer **Reinhardt Wagner**, and theater plays with **Benjamin Murat** and **Pierre Notte**.

Press Quotes

- Pure Jazz. All the colors of Jazz.
– *Jacques Pauper / Couleurs Jazz*
- A six strings singer.
– *Jean-Marc Gélin / Les Dernières Nouvelles du Jazz*
- I hear a well articulated playing, in the tradition, masterized.
– *Alex Duthil / Jazzman*
- A dynamic voice in the Jazz world today.
– *Edward Blanco / All About Jazz*
- Didier Verna plays very much in the Pat Metheny tradition but with a sunny, melodic touch.
– *Chris Mosey / All About Jazz*
- Didier Verna plays straight ahead Jazz, clearly influenced by Pat Metheny from whom he has the roundness of sound and the limpity of phrases.
– *Citizen Jazz*
- Didier Verna is a Jazz guitarist dealing in melodic and harmonic invention. His Metheny-esque improvisational delivery is compromising, non rigorous with a superb technique.
– *Georges W. Carroll / EJazzNews*
- Fresh, melodically challenging and engaging.
– *John Luciano / Contemporary Jazz*
- A force of nature.
– *Martin Gladu / All About Jazz*
- In the early Scofield Department.
– *Fiona Ord-Shrimpton / All About Jazz*

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- Some Beautiful Jazz Guitar.
– *Antoine Hervé*
 - Super sound, beautiful compositions.
– *Ludovic de Preissac*
 - You have a neat touch, and a very limpid playing.
– *Sébastien Charlier*
 - I really like your playing and above all its fluidity, one essential quality, for me, in music. —
Benoît Sauvé.
– *Benoît Sauvé*
 - Your playing reminds me of Jimmy Raney's which I love for its fluidity and its obviousness.
– *Jean-Michel Kajdan*
 - I think that this is great quality Jazz playing.
– *Yves Carbonne*

