



MOONSUN CHRISTOPHE SCHWEIZER

C O C O A

christophe schweizer
david binney
jacob sacks
hans glawischnig
dan weiss

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www.unitrecords.com
www.christopheschweizer.com

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„Thank you for the music. You are a very important musician for at least three reasons:

because the music itself is new, intense, and fascinating,

because it's being made of personal organic necessity,

and because other gifted musicians obviously find it fascinating to play.”

Lawrence J. Kart, ehemals Mitherausgeber von Down Beat Magazine, Autor des Buches “Jazz in Search of itself”, in einem Brief an CS

Short Text / Picture Caption

Extended Text

MUSIC UNMASKED

Moonsun Christophe Schweizer present their new album COCOA.

Composer and trombonist Christophe Schweizer describes the group's "Maximal Music" as "the essence of groove and freedom. This is music for everyone - no posing, but real life. "

The hand picked personnel includes saxophonist David Binney, reputed as currently one of the most creative and prolific musicians on the New York scene, pianist Jacob Sacks, who recorded with Paul Motian, bassist Hans Glawischnig, who is a long time associate of David Sanchez and who also played with Chick Corea, and drummer Dan Weiss, a tabla master, who is long past being known to insiders.-

MAXIMAL MUSIC

Assuming the universe of music as a whole is to be understood as a periodic table of elements of sorts, in which each style inhabits a neatly labeled square, any musical occurrence could be analyzed and named according to it's mixture of such elements.

If this is the case, we hereby add a new square labeled "Maximal Music" to this table in order to describe the music played by Moonsun.

"I want to create music in which musicians do not act as theatre characters, but as themselves. We don't want our listeners to experience fake emotions, but the game of life itself, which always remains open. Our music is supposed to bring joy. It's that simple," explains trombonist and composer Christophe Schweizer.

"Of course it sounds Jazz-like, and some of what's being called Jazz these days is really more like good pop music. On the other hand, many

people seem to think of Jazz as music for specialists.

We're different from all that. People tend to forget that any audience is made up of humans, which means they enjoy pleasant surprises more than anything, because that is human nature. I have witnessed - with this band as well as with even more extreme projects - packed halls applauding enthusiastically, even though no one could have possibly been prepared for what they ended up hearing. Of course the band played great, but the big reason is that the gift of something unexpected is something which

Schweizer's answer to the question of how he defines "Maximal Music" is a simple one: "It's Groove and Freedom. That's what makes this band special. When we play the pieces recorded on "Cocoa", which were deliberately conceived purely mathematically, without the insinuation of an emotional content, it's a bit like playing chess and tennis simultaneously: the combinations of action, reaction, intuition and experience generate a multitude of ways how the game evolves - it might happen for instance that an energetic up tempo piece morphs into a ballad and vice versa-, and it's that unfiltered input from the musicians which is responsible for the intensely real drama. We don't set limits for ourselves, but we stay with the story, so to speak - the tennis player doesn't all of a sudden pick up the soccer ball."

"It wouldn't be accurate to suggest there weren't a lot of models and influences at work behind our music, but we avoid boring our listeners and ourselves with dogmas and imitations. We draw from the entirety of possibilities."

Finally, how come as many as three members from David Binney's Balance Band are part of the Moonsun line up? "When the group formed in New York, players would change all the time. When we were getting ready to tour in 2000, we were looking for a saxophonist. Someone suggested calling David Binney, who had not played with the band previously. He was available, we had a great tour, and not long after that, he started using Jacob and Dan. And it's been that way to this day."



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BIOGRAPHY

Christophe Schweizer is an individualist even by the standards of his trade.

Born in one of the most beautiful areas of Switzerland, he was introduced at an early age to different kinds of music by his parents. One type of music was western European church music, which explains in part his conviction that music should convey a spiritual message.

Another was Jazz. Possibly because the latter direction seemed more interesting at the time, at the age of twelve he gave up the violin lessons he once had wished for so fervently, and instead turned to trombone and piano. He was fourteen when he joined the band of his father, who is also a church organist and choir director.

However, he soon abandoned professional studies at Berne Conservatory (Branimir Slokar) and Berne Jazz School and joined the Punk-Jazz group "So Nicht!", which would go on to win second prize in the 1990 European Jazz Contest at Leverkusen, Germany, and whose performance concerts and attacks on critics became legendary. All the same, he remained active as a classical musician, a.o. as principal trombonist with the Swiss Youth Symphony Orchestra, and as a Soloist with Pro Musica Orchestra Lausanne.

After attending the 1991 Banff Jazz Workshop in Canada (Faculty included Steve Coleman, Keith Copeland, Rufus Reid, Robin Eubanks, Kenny Wheeler), he moved to New York in 1992 to attend Mannes College of Music for one and a half Semesters, where his teachers were Conrad Herwig, Richie Beirach, Billy Hart, and David Taylor among others.

In 1993, he left Mannes, and after a three month term as resident artist at the Banff Centre (Canada), returned temporarily to Switzerland, where he was quickly engaged to play in many projects a.o. with Lee Konitz, Phil Woods, or Paulo Moura (Montreux Jazz Festival).

Having become active as a self taught composer for some time, he recorded his first album as a leader in New York in 1994. "Normal Garden" appeared on Mons Records.

The following year, he relocated to New York once again, this time to stay for the next seven years and to immerse himself fully in the world of Jazz. In 1996 he toured with his septet "Normal Garden" for the first time, and became a member of the George Gruntz Concert Jazz Band (a twofold honor, as a bass trombonist in the succession of the great David Taylor, and in a section with Ray Anderson, David Bargeron, and veteran Ellingtonian Art Baron / CD Merryterria on TCB), with whom he toured for three years on several continents, playing in numerous festivals and concert halls. That was why he had to turn down an invitation to tour with Ray Charles at one point. Furthermore, he became part of the pool of musicians from which the Mingus Big Band's personnel is drawn, touring Europe with them twice in 2002, and being invited again as a guest in 2005, when he had already relocated to Europe. Among the other projects he played with were George Schuller's Orange then Blue, and Matt Darriau's Ballin' the Jack. Christophe can be heard on the newly released album "A New Day" (Challenge, 2008) by pianist Vana Gierig.

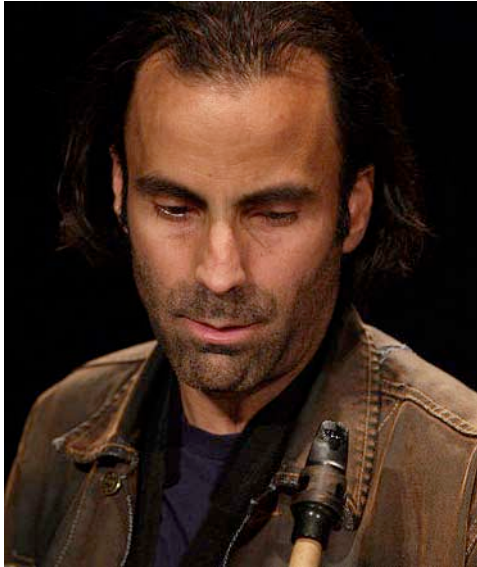
During this time, Schweizer developed different formulae for his compositions; he continued the

Omnitone, 2002), and initiated other projects such as the organ quartet “Full Circle Rainbow” (“Dual Orbit” on TCB, 2004) and in particular “5SIX7, a quintet which developed a highly individual musical language, released on the album “Portas” (MGB, 2001). A further production dating from 2003 is as of yet unreleased, as well as the music of the freer Quartet “Quadrant X”, which a.o. featured Mark Dresser.

Currently, the group “Moonsun” (David Binney, Jacob Sacks, Hans Glawischnig, Dan Weiss) offers the most vital realizations of Schweizers concept of pairing compositional intricacy with free-spirited expression, which is evidenced on the forthcoming album “Cocoa” (Unit, 2009). Schweizer also became active as a contemporary composer and in 1997 wrote the piece “4-1” for the 100th anniversary of the death of Johannes Brahms in Thun (where Brahms spent several summers).

In 2002, Schweizer moved to Hamburg, where today he lives with his family. Since then, he has yet again expanded his musical radius, by on the one hand adding tuba, electronics, and alphorn to his collection of instruments (in 2006, he performed Daniel Schnyder’s Alphorn Concerto with the Gstaad Festival Orchestra at a concert in Singapore), and on the other hand broadening his stylistic range. Examples of this are his numerous connections to the world of Big Bands (a.o. NDR Big Band, Roger Cicero Big Band, Guimaraes Festival Orchestra, Jazz Big Band Graz and many others), where he is in demand as a lead-, solo-, or bass trombonist, and also functions as an arranger; concerts with leading European Jazz musicians such as Nguyen Le, Markus Stockhausen, Gianluigi Trovesi, Kenny Wheeler, Dieter Ilg and Wolfgang Haffner, also with Lee Konitz/Ohad Talmor at North Sea Jazz 2004; with old NY acquaintances as in 2006 on tour with Seamus Blake, David Kikoski, Danton Boller, Gene Jackson; ethnic music with Russian/Georgian United Color Ensemble, with St.Petersburg cult group La Minor, with Arkady Shilkloper’s World Project (Moscow, Dom Musici 2006), and with the group of Cuban trumpeter extraordinaire Oslen Ceballo (formerly of Afro-Cuban-All-Stars); funk with Nils Gessinger Band; theme projects like Rocket No.9 (music of Sun Ra) or Eisenrot (double trio with structured improvisation, CD on BPM 2007); electronic

septet “Normal Garden” (Album “Physique” on project Duo Da Vis with Yannick Barman; free improvisation with drummer Michael Werthmuller (of Peter Brotzmann) and guitarist Olaf Rupp; and finally, New Music. Christophe is a member of the Geneva based ensemble “Car de Thon” directed by the young cellist and composer Brice Catherin, who in 2006 wrote his composition “La Femme Fontaine” (tuba solo and electronics) for Christophe. In 2009, Schweizer directed this ensemble in an improvised concert which is due for release on the netlabel insubordinations, and in 2010 he is scheduled to perform Catherins 10-hour composition “Ma pièce avec comme un espoir à la fin”. Together with Brice, they form the uncompromising instant-composition duo “Bristophe”, whose debut was recorded in the summer of 2009 and is currently awaiting release.



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BIOGRAPHY

Acclaimed as a considerable and highly individual compositional talent, saxophonist David Binney is one of the most prolific young jazz musicians on the scene today

Winning praise from critics and colleagues alike, David was recently singled out by Jazz Times as one of a handful of "young players who have created an alternative Jazzscene... all of whom are playing adventurous, original music."

Known for his performances with such prestigious groups as the big bands of Gil Evans and Maria Schneider, as well as with Jim Hall, Bobby Previte and the Cecil McBee quintet. David was also a co-founder of the hard-edged quintet "Lost Tribe" and the open-form collective quartet "Lan Xang." With these groups and on his own, he has recorded a dozen albums as leader or co-leader.

David was born in Miami, Florida and raised in Southern California. His love of jazz dates back to his childhood, when the music of Coltrane, Miles, Bobby Hutcherson, Wayne Shorter and many others was introduced to him by his parents [along with that of Milton Nascimento, Jimi Hendrix and Sly Stone, of course].

He began to study the saxophone and at the age of 19 moved to New York City to play gigs and to study with Phil Woods, David Liebman and George Coleman.

In 1989 David was awarded a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to record his first album. "Point Game", which was released on the French label Owl Records,

featuring Marvin "Smitty" Smith, Edward Simon, Adam Rogers and Lonnie Plaxico.

Since then, David's distinctive saxophone sound and innovative compositions have been heard from basement clubs in New York to jazz festivals in Europe. In addition to David's extensive work as a leader, he has been sought after as a sideman, appearing on record with Medeski, Martin & Wood and Uri Caine's Mahler Project.

David has also appeared on stage with Aretha Franklin, at Carnegie Hall, and with Maceo Parker, to name a few. He has produced all of his own albums, in addition to two of the Lost Tribe releases. David started his record label, Mythology Records, in 1998.-



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BIOGRAPHY

Jacob Sacks is one of the most creative pianists on the NYC jazz scene today. His strong individual voice has been heard in a variety of settings ranging from the mainstream jazz traditions of the Mingus Big Band and Orchestra to the compositional free jazz style of the Mat Maneri ensemble to the vamp based fusion of Dave Binney's Balance.

Jacob currently resides in Brooklyn, where he is working on several recording projects and on a book for beginning pianists. He also runs the record label YeahYeah Records in partnership with singer Yoon Choi.

Originally from Michigan, Jacob moved to NYC in 1995 to study with Garry Dial at the Manhattan School Of Music. After graduating in 1998, he focused his energies on both performing and teaching music. In the performing arena, Jacob became a member of many different ensembles, recorded several albums, and has toured the United States, Europe, and Canada several times.

Along the way, Jacob has had the honor and privilege to perform with musicians such as Clark Terry, Paul Motian, Joe Maneri, Charles Gayle, Eddie Henderson, Christian McBride, Brian Blade, Tony Malaby, Chris Potter, Mark Turner, Ben Monder, Adam Rogers, Kenny Wollesen, Gene Jackson, and Matt Wilson.

Also after graduating, Jacob decided to devote a good amount of his time to bringing music to students of all ages. While currently teaching 30 or so students in private practice, Jacob has also joined with Bob Bowen, Brian Dye, Mike McGinnis, and Khabu Doug Young to form a partnership, the Creative Music Workshop, a cooperative school based upon helping students of all ages and levels transcend the boundaries of style to find their own voices through the creation of original works, both written and spontaneously conceived, in different sized ensembles.



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BIOGRAPHY

Hans Glawischnig was born in Graz, Austria on October 22, 1970. His father, a respected pianist, big band leader and educator, instilled in Hans an early interest in music, enrolling him in 1976 as a violinist in the talented pupils class of the Academy of Music in Graz.

In 1983, Hans began playing the electric bass and by 1986 added the double bass which was to become his main musical voice. From 1986 to 1988 he studied part-time at the Jazz Department of the Academy with renowned American bassist Wayne Darling.

After high school Hans relocated to the United States to accept a scholarship at Berklee School of Music. During his years in Boston he honed the skills he is known for: mastery of varied musical genres, strong musicianship and an inquisitive musical nature. He studied with bassist Bruce Gertz, played and recorded with faculty members Hal Crook, Phil Wilson and Greg Hopkins and accompanied several visiting clinicians, including drummers Steve Smith and Casey Scheuerell. He also was presented with several Professional Music Awards and in 1992 he received his B.A. magna cum laude.

That same year Hans made his move to New York to join the M.A. program at Manhattan School of Music on scholarship. At MSM he met many of the musicians he now regularly works with while studying electric bass with Jeff Andrews. Throughout his studies he gave lessons privately and tutored students for their harmony and ear training exams as a means of additional income. Word got out of his talents long before his graduation in 1994, and he was

already turning down gigs in order to complete his studies.

Hans' first break came in 1995 when he was hired to fill the bass chair in Bobby Watson's Urban Renewal band on the recommendation of fellow student Steffon Harris, playing alongside New York veterans Victor Lewis, Mark Soskin, Rachel Z, Sammy Figueroa and Steve Kroons. A stint with Maynard Ferguson's Big Bop Nouveau was to follow later that year.

1996 was to be a pivotal year for Hans. While keeping busy performing as a freelancer around the New York area, he was invited to play with Ray Barretto's renowned New World Spirit ensemble. Though he had played Latin music throughout his days in New York, his exposure to this legendary artist helped Hans refine his interpretation of rhythm, improvisation and musical interaction. The group toured extensively and recorded two albums, Contact! for Blue Note records and Live in Europe (presently unavailable in the United States). Further engagements with Paquito D'Riviera, Dave Samuels and Bobby Sanabria followed swiftly, as did performances with Rick Margitza, Garry Dial, Billy Harper, Richie Beirach, Billy Hart, Joe Locke, Dave Binney, Adam Rogers, Steffon Harris, Claudio Roditi, Billy Drewes, Jamey Haddad, Brian Lynch, Phil Woods and Claudia Acuna, to name a few.

Another great opportunity presented itself when Hans was invited to join David Sanchez' Melaza Sextet in 1998. The group toured the globe and recorded two albums for Columbia - Melaza (for which Hans penned Orbitando) and Travesia -

which pushed the envelope of Latin Jazz to its limits and brought the group great critical acclaim as well as two Grammy Award nominations.

In 2001, Hans recorded a number of his own compositions, which were released as Common Ground on the Spanish label Fresh Sounds/New Talent in the summer of 2003. Several of his originals and arrangements were recorded by David Sanchez and Ken Hatfield (The Traveler for Music for Guitar and Bass on Arthur Circle records). For a reunion with Ray Barretto on Tribute to Art Blakey (on Sunnyside Records) Hans contributed an arrangement of Buh's Bossa, and a recent session for Brian Lynch features the original composition Beholding. Recent projects included recording sessions with James Moody for an upcoming album on Savoy records and extensive touring with Claudia Acuna, Mark Murphy and David Sanchez.

His most recent record, Panorama, was released in 2009 on the Sunnyside label.



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BIOGRAPHY

Dan Weiss is a drummer, tabla player, and composer residing in Brooklyn, New York. As a sideman he plays with different ensembles. He leads his own groups "Dan Weiss Trio" (Dan Weiss dr, Thomas Morgan b, Jacob Sacks p), and "Tabla Drumset Project" (Dan Weiss dr, Miles Okazaki guitar). Besides, he co-leads the "Ari Hoenig / Dan Weiss Drum Duo". In addition, he is also a member of the doom metal group "Bloody Panda".

Dan is blessed to have had Pandit Samir Chatterjee as his guru for the past nine years.

"Chilla is a sadhana, tapasya. Through this disciplined practice the mind discovers the body and the body discovers the mind." – Samir Chatterjee

"The relationship between a guru and disciple is a very special one, transcending that between parent and child, husband and wife, or friends. A guru is free from egotism. He devotedly leads his disciple towards the ultimate goal without any attraction for fame or gain. He shows the path of God and watches the progress of his disciple, guiding him along that path. He inspires confidence, devotion, discipline, deep understanding and illumination through love. With faith in his pupil, the guru strains hard to see that he absorbs his teachings. He encourages his students to ask questions and to know the truth by question and analysis. A disciple should possess the necessary qualifications of higher realisation and development. He must have confidence, devotion, and love for his guru." – B.K.S. Iyengar

Dan Weiss started playing the drums at the age of 6. He studied privately since he began. His main teacher as a child and teenager was Jeff Krause. While in high school he studied classical piano and classical composition. He studied drums and composition at the Manhattan School of music. His drum teacher was John for 4 years and his composition

frame drums with Jamey Haddad.

He has performed and or recorded with David Binney, Lee Konitz, Dave Liebman, Rudresh Mahanthappa, Vijay Iyer, Miguel Zenon, Wayne Krantz, Kenny Werner, Ritchie Beirach, Ben Monder, Uri Caine, Village Vanguard Orchestra, Ravi Coltrane and many others. He has been touring Europe and North America extensively for the past seven years with many different projects. He has also played in South America and Asia and has recorded for Omnitone, Fresh Sound/New Talent, Arabesque, Pi, Criss cross, Between The Lines, Act, Hat Hut, and Auand record labels.

Dan has been studying tabla for the last nine years exclusively under the guidance of his guru Pandit Samir Chatterjee. He has performed classical Indian music in India and the U.S. with Ramesh Mishra, Mandira Lahiri, Subra Guha, Anoushka Shankar, Joyas Biswas, K.V. Mahabala and Steve Gorn. He has also performed in recitals with his teacher in Kolkatta, India.

Weiss has two recordings under his own name. One is a solo recording which contains traditional tabla repertoire adapted to the drumset in a classical manner. Dan's most recent recording is a trio cd which includes Jacob Sacks on piano and Thomas Morgan on bass — a recording which features his compositions. Dan is also involved in a "doom" heavy metal band called "Bloody Panda" whose record came out early 2007. Dan also plans to record his duo drum project with Ari Hoenig. His solo tabla cd came out early in 2007.

Dan will also start contributing articles to modern drummer dealing with Indian rhythm and its applicability to western contexts. Dan has self published a book entitled "Tintal Drumset Transcriptions." He has given clinics all over the United States as well as Canada and Europe. He has a loyal base of students in the New York area.