

MUZZIX - ART ZOYD STUDIOS

OCÉAN - MÉMOIRE

Composed by Kasper T. TOEPLITZ
To be premiered in 2025

Co-produced by Art Zoyd Studios - Centre de création musicale and Muzzix
With the support of the Délégation Régionale des Affaires Culturelles and the Région Hauts-de-France, the Département du Nord, Valenciennes Métropole, the City of Valenciennes
The Communauté d'Agglomération Maubeuge-Val de Sambre and its Pôle des Cultures Actuelles (PCA) in Aulnoye-Aymeries as part of a programme of artists' residencies in the region run by Muzzix.
With the support of la Maison de la Musique Contemporaine in 2025.

Duration: 1 hour
Composed by Kasper T. Toeplitz
With Kasper T. Toeplitz (electric bass and electronics)
Barbara Dang (keyboards and electronics)
Peter Orins (acoustic and electronic percussions, electronics)
Christian Pruvost (trumpets and electronics)

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AN IMMERSIVE, HYPNOTIC PIECE

Océan – Mémoire is a musical work that explores sounds made unusual by the use of **microtonality** and a **non-octaving** structure. In other words, the notes do not follow traditional octave repetition patterns, but instead create a dense and complex soundscape, where each pitch blends into the next. This approach produces a richness of sound that will surprise ears accustomed to conventional intervals.

More precisely, the piece uses extremely small intervals, not even in quarter tones (as might be found in some experimental music), but in $1/24$ tones. This much finer process makes it possible to play notes that are very close in pitch to each other, with differences that are almost imperceptible individually, but which together form a unique sound texture. The result is subtle nuances, harmonic continuity and micro-variations that blur the usual pitch references.

This creates a meshing of sounds so tight that the notes blend together like shades of color that are impossible to distinguish precisely. The listener is immersed in a sea of sounds where it becomes difficult to discern every detail, as if observing the ocean and its infinite waves.

The piece is carried by a quartet of musicians: **Kasper T. Toeplitz** on bass and electric sub-bass, **Barbara Dang** on keyboards, **Peter Orins** on acoustic and electronic percussions, and **Christian Pruvost** on trumpets.

All these instruments are amplified and electronically transformed. There is in addition a purely electronic element, generated in real time by an autonomous program that enriches the piece, like a virtual fifth performer.



Océan - Mémoire

Once this idea of microscopic worlds had been established, I had to define who I wanted to compose for. I strongly defend the idea of writing music for individuals rather than for instruments played by anonymous people (the choice of instrument is the choice of the individual, he or she who, years ago and for personal reasons, as a life choice, decided to spend the next 20 or 50 years banging a drum or blowing a clarinet), and so the instrumental line-up only becomes clearer as the musicians are chosen.

In this instance the choice was quickly made to turn to the musicians of the MUZZIX ensemble who are well versed in the challenges of microtonal music, as they practice it themselves. A certain geographical proximity also made sense: as the composition was commissioned by Art Zoyd Studios, collaborating with a Lille-based collective seemed a natural step, just as it seemed natural to me to be one of the performers and immerse myself in the sound of these dust clouds.

So, the technical challenge became to bend this instrumentarium of trumpets, electronic keyboards, electric bass and percussions to the needs of the initial idea of microtonal spaces.

But as I can no longer imagine a musical composition without the presence of electronics (at least in the thought of the music, but more often than not also in its role in relation to the instrumental playing, and the instruments themselves), it was with its help that I designed devices enabling the exploration of these sonic territories.

As far as my own bass is concerned, these are paths I often take, and the use of long delay lines as well as the temporal 'freezing' of certain events allow me to modify the organology of the instrument, to make it highly polyphonic and to increase its ambitus, both by pushing back the boundaries and by going into the smallest differences. I applied the same process, more or less, to the trumpet, and it is increased tenfold by the use of a slide trumpet.

As for the keyboards, the option was to divide (virtually, through the magic of electronics) each key – in fact, each note – into 12 segments of very close pitches. A division so fine that the human ear has difficulty perceiving the differences – which was the intent.

This modification of the traditional keyboard is complemented by the use of the OSMOSE keyboard (a new creation from Expressive E), which allows each key, and therefore each note played, to be modulated individually in both pitch and tone. A similar process will be applied to the percussion keyboard (MIDI vibraphone) and the electronic pads, while the non-pitched acoustic percussion instruments (gongs or low-pitched drums) will be able to electronically generate false resonances such as halos of texture or iridescence around their harmonic 'centres'.

When we first assembled to play, it didn't take us long to get lost in the soundscapes that emerged, always different although almost identical, a sort of shimmering of the same, which only reinforced my initial desire for a long composition, an evening-length piece, and led to the idea of the title, based on a relative inability to keep track of such a large set of very slightly different data: Océan-Mémoire."

July 2024

KASPER T. TOEPLITZ

As a composer and electric bass player, Kasper Toeplitz has developed his work in the no man's land between "academic" electronic composition (orchestra, ensembles, opera) and noise music. He works as much with major state institutions (GMEM, GRM, IRCAM, Radio-France) as with experimental or unclassifiable musicians such as Eliane Radigue, Zbigniew Karkowski, Dror Feiler, Phill Niblock, Z'ev or Vomir, among others. He often collaborates with contemporary dance and his music is performed - whether in solo concerts or by various ensembles - throughout Europe, North and South America, Asia and Australia. Since 2019 he is Associate Composer at Art Zoyd Studios.

>>sleazeart.com

>>kaspertoepplitz.bandcamp.com

BARBARA DANG

Barbara Dang is a pianist, performer and improviser from Lille, and a member of the Muzzix collective. She is involved in performing, and in some case premiering contemporary music, which she weaves together with free improvisation. She has worked with Sophie Agnel, Borja Flames, Aude Romary, Laure Vovard, Jean-Luc Guionnet, composers Radu Malfatti, Michael Pisaro-Liu and Tom Johnson, stage director Halory Goerger, video artist Lionel Palun and harpsichord maker David Boinnard. He has taken part in a wide range of projects, from postmodern works with Ensemble Dedalus to Looking for Hart's Songs with Olivier Mellano and Pianoïse by Emmanuel Lalande.

PETER ORINS

Peter Orins is a French drummer active in jazz, improvised and experimental music since the mid-90s. In 2000, he founded the Circum collective (which became Muzzix in 2010), of which he is still one of the artistic directors. Leading many projects as part of the collective, from solo to large orchestras, he also collaborates with many international musicians (Satoko Fujii, Natsuki Tamura, Ikue Mori, Dave Rempis, Joke Lanz, Michael Pisaro-Liu, Jean-Luc Guionnet, Sophie Agnel, Christine Wodrascka...), and is very active on the improvised music scene in France and abroad. Since 2004, he has run the Circum-Disc label, which has released around a hundred recordings.

CHRISTIAN PRUVOST

A composer and improvising musician, for several years he has been involved in a wide range of collaborations whether in the field of contemporary music, jazz, improvised music or live performance. During his training, he devoted himself to musique concrète, acousmatic music and electroacoustic composition with Carole Rieussec and Roger Cochini in particular.

MUZZIX

Muzzix is a collective of around thirty musicians based in Lille, exploring musical aesthetics ranging from contemporary jazz to experimental and improvised music. Active since the late 90s, Muzzix promotes a collective approach to musical creation, encouraging exchange and cross-fertilisation between artists and disciplines. Every year, the collective puts together a multitude of projects, ranging from solos to full orchestras, from concerts to sound installations and performances. It is notable for its ability to mix formats and styles, while maintaining high artistic standards and experimentation as its watchword. Muzzix is also involved in cultural outreach through educational initiatives and residencies, confirming its key role in Lille's contemporary music scene.

>>www.muzzix.info

LOUDOM SOUTHAMMAVONG

A Computer Music Producer at Art Zoyd Studios, he helps composers use digital technologies and computer tools to create, arrange and produce their musical works. He designs and develops specific software or devices suited to their needs, trains them in the use of these tools, enabling them to gain greater autonomy in their creative process, and works closely with them, bringing a technical and artistic perspective to enrich their musical creation.

ART ZOYD STUDIOS

Based in Valenciennes, Art Zoyd Studios is a Centre for Musical Creation.

Through residences, the centre encourages the conception and realisation of new musical works, ensures their dissemination, and contributes to the development of musical research. Playing new instruments, discovering new musical forms, creating, listening, and exploring sounds are the core of Art Zoyd Studios. It was founded in 1999 by Gérard Hourbette and Monique Hourbette-Vialadieu. It bears the name of Art Zoyd, a progressive rock band that Gérard Hourbette led until his death in 2018 (with Thierry Zaboïtzeff as joint leader until 1997). Drawing on the infinite sound resources of electronic instruments, Art Zoyd mixed the influences of rock and electroacoustic music to bring out music's phantasmatic and evocative powers.

>>artzoydstudios.com

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OCEAN - MEMOIRE

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