

Biography



Laurent Coq was born on Feb 22, 1970 in Marseille. The youngest of five boys, he grew up in the countryside around Aix-en-Provence. He started studying piano at age 7. Three years later, he entered the Aix-en-Provence National Dance and Music Conservatory in Ms Courtin's class (also Helene Grimaud's teacher).

In 1988, he was awarded First Prize and moved to Paris where he registered at the C.I.M (in those days, the number one jazz school in France). He studied with Emmanuel Bex, and met with drummer Daniel Garcia Bruno and bass player Jules Bikoko bi Njami with whom he formed the Ad For Tri trio.

From 1989 to 1994, he multiplied experiences. He played in alto saxophonist Patrick Bocquel's Quintet, a band that made quite an impact in winning numerous competitions, one of which the CRPLF (French-as-a-first-language National Radios), led to the recording of *Radio Days*. He also took part in vibraphone player Oriol Bordas's band, Paris Barcelona Swing Connection. Among the many performances, there was a french tour with special guest American Saxophonist Frank Wess (Vienne 1993). One must also mention his collaboration with singer Marcel Kanche, with whom he toured Europe and recorded two albums (Barclay).

In 1994, he obtained a Grant from the French Government for a six months stay in New York. He took lessons from piano players Mulgrew Miller and John Hicks, but most notably from Bruce Barth who will soon become his mentor and a true friend, which he remains to this day. Back in Paris, Laurent turned this precious experience into a Quartet that included his old pals Jules Bikoko bi

Njami and Daniel Garcia Bruno and young tenor Jean-Christophe Béney.

In 1996, the composer signed his first film score for actor/director Alain Beigel. *Il y a des journées qui mériteraient qu'on leur casse la gueule* won First Prize at the Meudon Short Films Festival, and the Grand Prix at the 1997 Metz Festival.

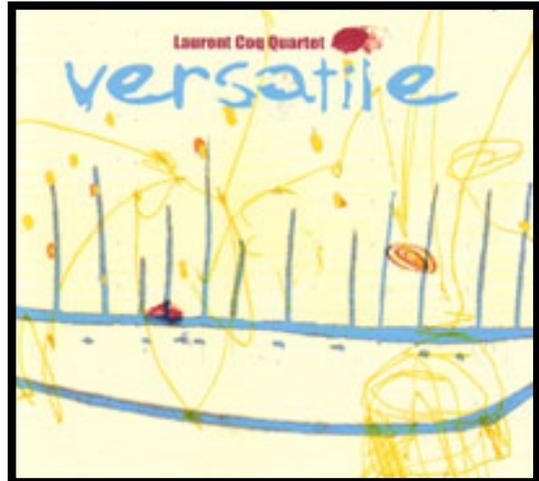


In February 1997, the quartet went to New York to record Laurent's first album as leader. Bruce Barth wore the artistic producer's hat and David Baker engineered the session. Thanks to Bruce, the album will be released on prestigious German label Enja. *Jaywalker* was an immediate success with the critics, and this first public recognition has since been maintained.

Not long before, Laurent Coq had met with singer Laurence Allison, and together they started to work thoroughly on Duke Ellington's repertoire. In 1997, they recorded *Soul Calls*, with a two-saxophones sextet. After six years of complicity, Daniel Garcia Bruno chose to devote himself to more personal projects, and Philippe Soirat took over the drums in the leader's quartet. Two years of hard work will produce a new repertoire still very much influenced by the New York scene, and an even more distinctive sound. At the time, Laurent Coq pursued his close collaboration with Laurence Allison taking a fresh approach to Bud Powell's and Thelonious Monk's worlds of music.

On the movie front, 1997 was an intense year. Teaming up with guitar player and composer Benjamin Raffaelli, Laurent signed the film scores of Laurent Benegui's *Mauvais Genre*, and *J'irai au paradis car l'enfer est ici* by Xavier Durringer. In 1998, Laurent and Benjamin met again on *Mille Bornes* by Alain Beigel..

In 1999, Laurent Coq produced two albums in New York; *Versatile* with his own quartet -- with the same *jaywalker* crew comprising of Bruce Barth as artistic producer and David Baker as sound engineer -- and Laurence Allison's *Thelonious & Bud Together Again* with her sextet. It will take more than a year for these two recordings to be published on the Cristal label, but this tenacity will be rewarded with unanimous praise.



The same year, Laurent signed the original score of the fairy tale *Airou ! J'ai compris* written and directed by Michel Uzan for the National Theater of Nanterre.

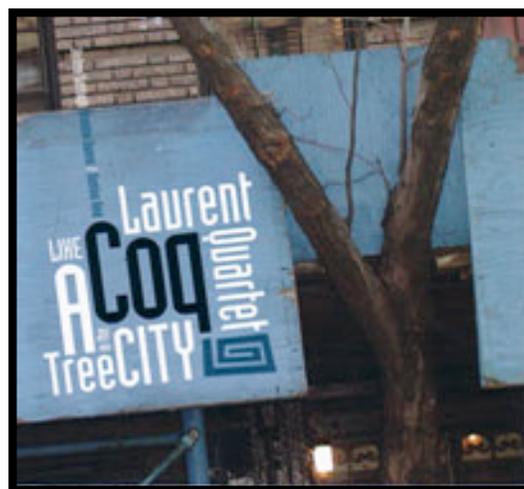
In 2000, he settled in New York where he met with another French expatriate, the saxophone player Jérôme Sabbagh. Frequently, he came back to Europe, and soon presented a one-of-a-kind trio with two saxophones (tenor David El-Malek and alto Olivier Zanot). In 2001, while in Paris, the band played at the Duc des Lombards and the concert was recorded by Claude Carriere and Jean Delmas for their weekly show on French National Radio, 'Jazz Club'. *Laurent Coq Blowing Trio/Live@the Duc des Lombards* received the Grand Prix du Disque Charles Cros 2002.



On May 2001, Laurent was granted an American Artist Visa. He was cast in Sarah Morrow's band for a few appearances in the U.S, notably at the New York JVC Festival and Washington jazz club Blues Alley. This was also the opportunity for him to meet with Mark Turner. Three days before 9-11, Laurent Coq flew back to Paris to record Jean-Christophe Bénéty's *Cassiope*.

Most importantly, since the summer, the composer had a new quartet that proudly endorsed New York dynamism. The group featured tenor saxophonist Jérôme Sabbagh, and two young musicians recently arrived from Los Angeles, bass player Brandon Owens and drummer Damion Reid. Together, they were going to develop an original music that was the natural consequence of the leader's previous years of work. On several occasions, they traveled overseas, and they performed at the 2002 Paris JVC Festival. In 2002, Laurent Coq played every Monday in a Village joint in NY, the Cafe Creole.

In March 2003, the quartet recorded *Like A Tree In The City* in a New Jersey studio. The album came out simultaneously in Europe on Cristal and in the U.S on Sunnyside, and served as a milestone in the career of an artist who continues to create a totally unique world. Laurent Coq was nominated by the French Jazz Academy for the Year's Best Musician Award.



In the fall of 2003, Laurent Coq signed the original film score for Laurent Benegui's *Qui perd gagne !* written for a 72 piece symphonic orchestra (with the exception of the closing credits song written for the Vintage Orchestra and sung by Allen Hoist). The soundtrack was released on June 22, 2004, one day before the movie.

In August 2004, Laurent got on stage for the first time with a piano trio for four nights in a row at the Sunside in Paris, bringing



along a drummer with whom he played quite a bit over the past years in New York, Otis Brown III. This naturally led to the recording of his first piano trio album for which he called the bass player everybody digs (Dianne Reeves, Joshua Redman, Charles Llyod...), Reuben Rogers. The session took place in a little Soho studio during two evenings of November 2004. *Spinnin'*

was released both in France (spring '05 on Cristal) and the U.S (fall 2005 on Sunnyside). In December 2004, French jazz magazine Jazzman asked him to conduct an interview with guitar player Pat Metheny that made the February issue front cover.

He also wrote a long biography of soul singer Donny Hathaway for new magazine Muziq.

The piano player spent the winter of 2005 in Paris where he was in residence at the jazz club La Fontaine, alternating with the Blowing trio featuring sax players David El-Malek and Olivier Zanut, and another trio with Mathias Allamane on bass and drummer Philippe Soirat. In June 2005, he played at the Paris Jazz Festival for the release of *Spinnin'*, along with Darryl Hall and Otis Brown III.

In September 2005, Laurent was featured in Elisabeth Kontomanou's new album untitled *Waiting For Spring* playing two duos, including his own composition Claude Sait renamed *The Bird In Me*. In October, he joined the Edim staff (Paris music school).

In 2006, Laurent multiplied his sideman engagements. First with American Saxophonist Rick Margitza who had a weekly gig at La Fontaine. That was also in this club that saxophonist Sophie Alour explored new directions and put her new quartet together along with Laurent. In the same period of time, Singer Sonia Cat-Berro called our man on a regular basis.

In June 2006, french saxophonist Julien Lourau asked Laurent to replace Bojan Zulfikarpasic to play at the National Music Day. The next day, they flew to New York where they met with bass player Thomas Bramerie and drummer Ari Hoenig and then to Haiti for an intense week. They played two gigs there ; one in Port-au-Prince, and the other in Jacmel, cradle of Haitian's culture. The Quartet Jacmel (soon to be renamed Saïgon) was born.

In December 2006, Spinnin' is granted the Best French Album of the Year Award by French Jazz Academy.

During the winter of 2006, Laurent worked on two different film projects ; With the Adami, he was asked to produce musical scores for short movies that will be presented at the Cannes Film Festival (Talents Cannes). He was also commissioned by the TV channel Arte to illustrate five documentary directed by Antoine Roux that will be aired on prime time in November 2006.

In september 2006, the Blowing trio entered the recording studio for the making of leader's sixth album, the second with his atypical band (one piano, two saxs). Singer Laurence Allison was invited on two originals. Two days after these sessions, Laurent flew to Japan where he performed solo for the first time. He did three shows, including one in front of five thousand people at the Sendai Street Jazz Festival, to promote the release of Spinnin' on Japanese label Wards Records.



In the fall of 2006, alto Pierrick Pedron hired him to play with his quartet after the released of his acclaimed new album, Deep In A Dream (Nocturne).

In early December, Laurent went to Vietnam along with Julien

Lourau and bass player Vincent Artaud. They met with drummer Otis Brown III, longtime Laurent's partner (*Spinnin'*). They played in Hanoi and Ho Chi Min City, former Saigon. Back from that trip, Laurent recorded Sophie Alour's new album *Uncaged* (Nocturne) in Paris.

Laurent was nominated 2006 Best Musician by the French Jazz Academy.

In January 2007, with the Pierrick Pedron quartet, Laurent was invited to perform at the annual New York Jazz Conference, IAJE. He took advantage of his being there to mix Sophie Alour's album at the famous Avatar Studio. The next day of his return, he joined Julien Lourau at the Lyon Opera Hall for three concerts with the Jacmel quartet (Thomas Bramerie and Ari Hoenig).

The new Blowing Trio album entitled *The Thing To Share* was released on March 8 on label Cristal. The band performed at the New Morning on April 25. Sophie Alour's album, *Uncaged*, was released in May on label Nocturne. Numerous concerts followed including an African Tour (ten countries) in the fall of 2007. Meanwhile, Pierrick Pedron's quartet performed in many venues in France and abroad throughout the year. The Jacmel Quartet with Julien Lourau was invited to perform three nights at the Paris Jazz Festival at La Villette in September 2007.

In 2008, Laurent continued to perform more and more in France and abroad with two visits to Algiers with Pierrick Pedron with whom he has done more than one hundred concerts over the past two years, with his Blowing trio, with Sophie Alour, and with Julien Lourau who brought his new quartet to Montenegro at the Podgoritsa Festival in May. The rhythm section has been definitively cast ; bass player Thomas Bramerie and drummer Otis Brown III. Upon Julien's request, Laurent wrote several originals for the band.

In June, he recorded Pierrick Pedron's new album in Paris. Right before leaving Paris for New-York, Laurent met with Japanese

dancer and choreographer Toshiko Oiwa (Twyla Tharp, Bill T. Jones, Preljocaj) for a total improvisation that was filmed. The movie called *Bird's Improvisation #1* was posted on pianist's website.

Beginning of July, Laurent returned to New-York for a three months stay. He instantly reconnected with former mates French tenor saxophonist Jérôme Sabbagh who has been in NY for more than twelve years and Californian drums prodigy Damion Reid. Naturally, this reunion reactivated the inspiration that once gave birth to the music of *Like a Tree in the City* and he devoted these Brooklyn weeks to the writing of a new repertoire that they recorded in a small New Jersey Studio, Tedesco, along with bass player Joe Sanders and the great and ever-faithful sound engineer Katsuhiko Naito. Just before that recording, at the end of August, Laurent flew back to Tokyo, Japan, to promote the release of the latest Blowing trio album *The Thing to Share* on Japanese label Ward Records (the label also released *Spinnin'*, *Versatile*, *Blowing Trio Live@the Duc des Lombards*, and *Like a Tree in the City*). Laurent's Blowing trio spent a week in the Japanese's capital and performed four times including an appearance at the prestigious Tokyo Jazz Festival.

Back to Paris at the end of September, Laurent went on a French tour with Sophie Alour and worked on adapting Pierrick Pedron's *Omry* to the stage. He practiced Miguel Zenon's music, for the Puerto Rican alto player asked him to replace his regular piano player Luis Perdomo for a couple of concerts in Europe. They played in Poland and at Lausanne Jazz Festival, Switzerland.

In December, Julien Lourau's Saigon Quartet with Thomas Bramerie on bass and drummer Otis Brown III played two nights at the Sunside in Paris before heading to the south where they recorded Julien's new album set to be released on September 2009.

2009 started with the release of Pierrick Pedron's new album *Omry* that drew immediate raving from the critics. This two-

drums sextet gave its first performances in Paris and in Brittany. An Algerian tour is Scheduled beginning of November 2009.



In March, Laurent created 88TREES, his new label that released *Eight fragments of Summer* - Laurent's seventh album as a leader - at the end of April. The press reviews were unanimous (4-stars in Jazzman, CD of the month in Jazz Magazine, 4f in Telerama).

Mid-April, Laurent met with Japanese dancer and choreographer Toshiko Oiwa again and together they performed their second improvisation. The movie was posted online on the pianist's website.

This year, Laurent was contacted by two eminent American saxophonists, Miguel Zenon and Sam Sadigursky, both winners of the CMA/FACE grant given by the prestigious Chamber Music America who helps finance projects that associate musicians from France and the U.S. In November of 2009, he participated in the composition of a new repertoire based on contemporary poems by French and American writers. This co-led ensemble with Sam Sadigursky featuring two singers, Laurence Allison and Christina Correa, played at the French National Radio in November, and at Sunside Jazz in Club in Paris.

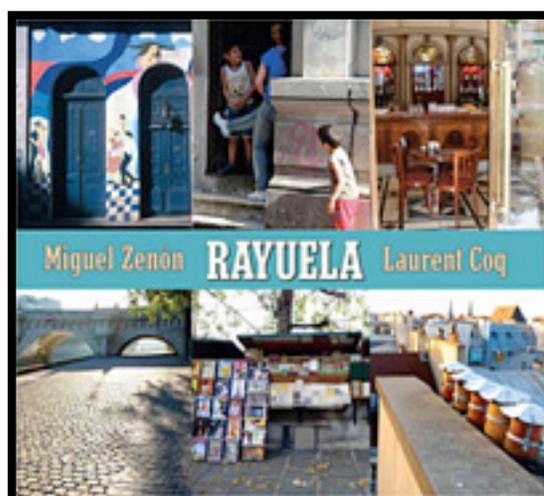
He also worked on new music inspired by *Rayuela* - the famous book by Argentinian writer Julio Cortazar - music that puertorican alto saxophonist - and winner of the MacArthur "Genius" grant - Miguel Zenon has asked him to write for an atypical band including Dana Leong on trombone and cello and Dan Weiss on drums and talba. The first concerts were given at Sunside Jazz Club in Paris, beginning of march 2010. The music was so well received that they decided to record it.

The same year, Laurent worked on a series of documentary directed by Antoine Roux with whom he has worked many times before. Movies were broadcast on National Television Channel Arte. He also started playing with Maltese guitar player Sandro Zerafa who was already working on a new repertoire written for a quartet that featured bass player Yoni Zelnik and drummer Karl Jannuska.

In June 2010, Pierrick Pedron's Omry locked itself in the basement in Montreuil to put together the new repertoire that Laurent Coq has arranged entirely. The recording took place at the legendary Brussels studio, ICP with sound engineer Jean Lamoot (Alain Bashung) and composer - winner of an Oscar for the original score of French movie *The Artist* - Ludovic Bource as artistic producer.

Coming back to Paris, Laurent met with young drummer Guilhem Flouzat who once was his student at EDIM and who left Paris for New York where he studied at the Manhattan School of Music. While in New York, he had written new material and asked Laurent to be his artistic producer. Recorded at Gimmick Studio, the album features an international cast : young French alto player Antonin Hoang, American saxophonist Ben Wendel (Kneebody), another young French expatriate in New York, Michael Valeanu, and two bass players playing alternatively, young Simon Tailleu and from Italy Matteo Bortone.

End of August, Laurent Coq went back to New York where he played the music of *Rayuela* with Miguel Zenon at Hartford, CT, and recorded it at Systems Two in Brooklyn. In November, Laurent Coq went on the road again with Julien Lourau's Saigon quartet. Beginning of December, he was at Studio La Buissonne in Pernes-les-



Fontaines, to record Sandro Zerafa's new album (PJU records).

In 2011, Laurent Coq launched an animated debate by addressing an open letter to Sebastien Vidal, head of the Parisian jazz radio TSF JAZZ, and booker of both Paris Jazz club Duc des Lombards and Django Reinhardt Jazz Festival in Sammois. These heated exchanges went viral on internet and soon Laurent decided to open a blog where musicians would express their frustrations in trying to keep their heads above water in a increasingly hostile environment. The blog became so popular that all the jazz press and most of the national newspapers wrote about it. Along with other musicians and Jazz writers, Laurent finally wrote an open letter to the Ministry of Culture, Mr Frédéric Mitterrand, that was published by national newspaper *Libération* to ask him to take the issues of jazz music and the fate of younger musicians more seriously. The ministry accepted to meet with him and two other French Jazz community representatives, piano player Pierre de Bethmann and radio producer Alex Dutilh, and asked them to organize a large consultation in order to summarize all the issues regarding jazz music in France. This intense process lasted for several months and in December of 2011, the group (including all the French jazz federations, major venues, festivals, jazz critics, producers, and many musicians) that worked on that large consultation was able to sent a important document to the French Ministry of Culture.

Despite these very busy months of activism, Laurent didn't give up on music. Mid April of 2011, he went back to studio La Buissonne along with Sam Sadigursky and four other musicians, including two singers, to record their collaborative work (*Sam Sadigursky & Laurent Coq - Crosswords / Mots Croisés*) and Sam's new album (*Words 4*). In May, he flew to New York to complete the mixing and the mastering of these two new albums with his old friend sound engineer Katsuhiko Naito.

In July of 2011, Laurent went back to La Buissonne one more time - the fourth time in one year - to record David Prez's new

album *Awakening* (PJU records).

In 2012, Laurent Coq continued to push the issues of Jazz in France, including the need to help the young generation that comes out of all the new schools that multiplied these past years all over the country without any perspective of playing or making a descent living. Along with the group that has worked on the document given to the ministry, he pursued several projects, including a new venue in Paris, and a program that would foster projects from young musicians with the help of older ones.

On the musical front, he started working with former student guitar player Ralph Lavital, and together they began playing gigs around town. In the spring of 2012, Laurent started writing new original music for this piano/guitar duo, and together, they



decided to add a voice on a few songs with the addition of singer Nicolas Pelage. In July of 2012, the three musicians went to studio La Buissonne, and recorded Laurent Coq's eight album as a leader entitled *Dialogue*. In August, Laurent Coq went back to New York to do the mixing and the

mastering of this new music with Katsuhiko Naito at Avatar Studio. He also played with Miguel Zenon the music of *Rayuela* at Newport Jazz Festival, and several times at Smalls Jazz Club with drummer Otis Brown III and tenor player Jerome Sabbagh.

Laurent Coq is currently teaching composition at EDIM, in Cachan, near Paris.



Laurent Coq in 16 dates

1970 Born in Marseille on February 22nd. Grow up around Aix-en-Provence.

1980 Enters Aix-en-Provence National Music Conservatory in Ms Courtin (also H el ene Grimaud's teacher). Gets First Prize in 1988 and moves to Paris to devote himself to Jazz.

1994 Obtains a Grant from the French Government for a six months stay in New York. He took lessons from piano players Mulgrew Miller and John Hicks, but most notably from Bruce Barth who will soon become his mentor and a true friend, which he remains to this day.

1997 Records [Jaywalker](#) in New York, his first album as a leader. Writes the film score of [Mauvais genre](#) (Laurent Benegui) and [J'irai au paradis car l'enfer est ici](#) (Xavier Durringer). In 1998, follows [Mille Bornes](#) by Alain Beigel.

1999 Records in New York [Versatile](#) with his own quartet, and *Thelonious & Bud Together Again* with Laurence Allison's sextet.

2001 Release of [Laurent Coq Blowing Trio/Live@the Duc des Lombards](#) (Grand Prix du Disque Charles Cros 2002).

Is granted an American Artist Visa (New York). Puts a new quartet together with J er ome Sabbagh (tenor), Brandon Owens (bass), and Damion Reid (drums).

2003 Records [Like A Tree In The City](#) with his American quartet. The album comes out simultaneously in the U.S (Sunnyside) and in Europe (Cristal).

2004 Signs the film score of [Qui perd gagne!](#) (Laurent Benegui) recorded in Sofia/Bulgary for an symphonic orchestra (soundtrack released in France).

2005 Release [Spinnin'](#), his first piano trio album recorded in New York in November 2004 with bass player Reuben Rogers and drummer Otis Brown III. Spend winter in Paris with a residence at La Fontaine. Plays the Paris Jazz Festival in June. *Spinnin'* receive 2005 Best French Album Award by the French Jazz Academy.

2006 Goes to Haiti along with Julien Lourau and the freshly born Jacmel Quartet. Records *The Thing To Share*, his sixth album as a leader, the second with his atypical Blowing Trio. Goes to Japan to perform solo for the first time and promote the release of *Spinnin'* on Japanese label Wards Records.

Goes to Vietnam with Julien Lourau, Vincent Artaud and Otis Brown III.
Records *Uncaged*, Sophie Alour's new album.

2007 Release of the Blowing Trio album, *The Thing To Share*, on label Cristal in March. Release of Sophie Alour's new album, *Uncaged*, on label Nocturne in May. African Tour in the fall (ten countries visited). Along with Julien Lourau and the Jacmel quartet, performs three concerts at the Paris Jazz Festival at La Villette in September.

2008 Arranges and records the repertoire of Pierrick Pedron's new project *Omry*. Returns to New York for a full summer devoted to the writing of new music with his former accomplices from *Like a Tree in the City*. Returns to Japan at the end of August to promote the release of the latest Blowing Trio *The Thing to Share* on Japanese label Ward Records (as well as *Versatile*, *Live @the duc des Lombards* and *Like A Tree in the City*). Performs four times during that week, including an appearance at the prestigious Tokyo Jazz Festival. Is called by Puerto Rican alto player Miguel Zenon to replace his regular piano player Luis Perdomo for two concerts in Europe, one in Poland, the other in Lausanne, Switzerland. In December, records the Julien Lourau *Saigon* Quartet new album with bass player Thomas Bramerie and drummer Otis Brown III.

2009 Release of Pierrick Pedron *Omry* in February followed by concerts with this double- drums sextet. Creation of 88TREES, the piano player's new label. Release of *Eight Fragments of Summer* end of April, his new quartet album (the seventh as a leader) featuring tenor player Jérôme Sabbagh, bass player Joe Sanders, and drummer Damion Reid. Release of Julien Lourau's new album after the summer. Recording of Sophie Alour's new album scheduled in September. Will take part in two new projects commissioned by Chamber Music Orchestra through the CMA FACE grant program. One with American tenor saxophonist Sam Sadigursky around contemporary poetry (concert scheduled in Paris end of November) and the other one with alto player Miguel Zenon for the writing of a repertoire inspired by Julio Cortazar's novel *Rayuela*. Concerts schedules in New-York and Paris on April 2010.

2010 Records *Cheerleaders*, second *Omry* album – Pierrick Pedron Rock-Jazz band – for which he signs the arrangements and one original, *Toshiko*. Records Guilhem Flouzat's album (*One Way... or Another*) as the pianist and artistic director of the project. In September, goes back to New York to meet with Miguel Zenon and members of *Rayuela*'s quartet (Dana Leong and Dan Weiss) with whom he records the music they both wrote (based on the famous Julio Cortazar's novel *Hopsctoch*). Back to France, he heads down to studio La Buissonne to record the Maltese guitar player Sandro Zerafa's second album entitled *Urban Poetics* (released on collective label PJU).

2011 Launches a wide debate on the state of Jazz in France and the increasingly preoccupying musicians condition with his new blog revolution-de-jazzmin.blogspot.fr . After meeting with Ministry of Culture Frédéric Mitterrand, he participates - along with many important figures and organizations that represent jazz in France - to several rounds of auditions that will produce a document on the state of Jazz in France - with many propositions to improve the situation - that they will submit to the Ministry at the end of the year. He also starts making short movies of musicians or people involved in this music who talk freely about what they do, and posts them online (vimeo.com/revolutionjazzmin). Records the repertoire he co-wrote with NY based saxophone tenor player Sam Sadigursky, as well as Sam's latest records. The two albums are recorded at Studio La Buissonne and mixed and mastered in NYC by the great Katsuhiko Naito at Avatar Studios. Records tenor saxophonist David Prez's new album entitled *Awakening*.

2012 Keeps pushing the issues regarding Jazz music in France with the same group of musicians, professionals and organizations representatives. Records his eighth album as a leader, *Dialogue*, along with guitar player Ralph Lavital - who once was a student in his composition class - and singer Nicolas Pelage. The album will be released on Sunnyside Records in the spring of 2013. Plays the Newport Jazz Festival with Miguel Zenon's *Rayuela* quartet.