

Christophe Monniot *Station MIR*

MIR is an acronym for Christophe Monniot, Didier Ithursarry and Guillaume Roy ; a word which in Russian language means “World” as well as “Peace”. In communion with these trio partners, Monniot sounds more lyrical than ever and he continues to develop the potential of his lush artistry. The influences on Station MIR range from “ball musette” to Ligeti, via Duke Ellington. Nothing is excluded, certainly not popular music. The trio was created in Grenoble in April 2010 and published its first album in December 2012 on Le Triton –record label.

Christophe Monniot (born June 1970) started to gain recognition in 1992 as a member of Tous Dehors, the large band led by clarinetist Laurent Dehors. In 1995, while still a student, he created “La Campagnie des Musiques a Ouir” with the drummer Denis Charolles and the saxophonist Cyril Serge (who was later substituted by Remi Sciuto and then Frédéric Gastard). This trio gained a reputation for being somewhat crazy, "dreamers of tomorrows", channelling Vince Taylor or The Police, offering an unexpected facelift of free improvisation, spiced up with a 'musette' style. “La Campagnie” was full of festive energy and celebrates a type of spectacle that brings the music as close to the public as possible

At the end of the 1990s, Christophe Monniot mixed with a whole new generation of rebels at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique, CNSM, in the University of Paris. These included such future stars as Fred Pallem (creator of the innovatory big band Sacre du Tympan where Christophe himself would later be a member), and reedists Matthieu Donarier and Remi Sciuto.

His outstanding skills as a soloist earned him invitations to join many groups, and especially Stephan Oliva’s *Seven Variations on Lennie Tristano* in 2002. He was part of Daniel Humair’s “Baby Boom”, Patrice Caratini’s jazz ensemble and took part in the collective adventure of the National Jazz Orchestra directed by Paolo Damiani from 2000 to 2002. He met and played with “La Compagnie Lubat”. His musical association with different artists led him to appear on many albums: Joachim Kuhn (“Homogenous Emotions” -2008), Stephan Oliva (“Echoes of Springs” – 2008), Francois Merville (“O Mago Hermeto” - 2008), and David Chevallier (“Pyromanes” – 2004, then “Gesualdo Variations” en 2010).

Next, Monniot created his own group “Monio Mania”, with five musicians from varied musical backgrounds. In 2001, he produced their first album in collaboration with these colleagues from the CNSM, Gueorgui Kornazov (trombone), Emil Spanyol (keyboard), Manu Codjia (guitar), Atsushi Sakai (cello) and Denis Charolles (drums). In 2005, he recorded his second album, this time with the addition of Marc Ducret (guitar). He composed and arranged all of this music,

In 2007, he put together “Vivaldi Universel”, an adaptation of the “Four Seasons” for a Jazz ensemble (comprising the Quartet Saxophones Arcanes that he had just joined, alongside a rhythm section). This project of orchestrators is truly novel, linking music and word around the theme of global warming: a soundtrack blends readings of expert reports and poetic texts.

Alongside the gifted keyboardist Emil Spanyi, Monniot created “Ozone” in 2006 to offer a very personal reading, resolutely electric and electronic, of jazz standards (from Duke Ellington to Antonio Carlos Jobim). A musical rainbow! This two-headed entity, accompanied by the drummer Joe Quitzke, offers a fun style of jazz, turbulent if not disconcerting, mixing mad improvisations, involving compositions and work with purely electronic sound. Their first album was feted by the French 'Academie Charles Cros', and their second, released in September 2010 by the Hungarian label BMC, immediately praised in Choc Magazine /Jazzman.

Christophe Monniot had grown in a family of musicians. His first instrument was the trumpet. As a teenager he studied classical saxophone at the conservatory. In 1995, he gained a Bachelor of Musicology at the University of Rouen, and continued his studies at the Jazz Department of the National Conservatory in Paris (CNSM). His teachers there were Francois Jeanneau and Jean-François Jenny-Clark, and visiting masters such as Ornette Coleman and Roy Haynes. Having started his career with two major prizes (Premier Prize for solo player at the National Jazz Competition of La Défense and first place in the Jazz Department in 1998) his trajectory has been equally stellar, culminating in this intense trio of adventurous and expert instrumentalists. MIR is surely destined to continue leading musical experimentation and orbit the globe with resounding success.



Christophe Monniot – photo by Shelomo Sadak