

Samy Thiébault

Born in the Ivory Coast to teachers, Samy Thiébault received his musical education at the Conservatoire de Bordeaux before entering the prestigious Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique in Paris to study jazz (class of 2008).

Parallel to his music studies, he obtained a Master's degree in philosophy, with high honors, from the Sorbonne (2001).

The album "Blues For Nel" came out in 2004, followed by "Gaya Scienza" in 2007, and "Upanishad Expériences" in 2010. This last album was the first project produced by the label he created and now directs, Gaya Music Production.

With the 2013 album "Clear Fire," audiences grew steadily, falling under the spell of Samy's music and prompting the press to say of his playing that it is "Coltranian in the best sense of the word" (Nouvel Obs). Other publications were unanimous in their praise: Révélation JazzMag, Coup de Cœur France Musique, Playlist TSF, Sélection JazzNews, L'Humanité, Télérama...

Samy Thiébault collaborates regularly on dance, theatre, and cinema projects, is frequently on tour with his quartet, and teaches at the Choisy-le-Roi conservatory near Paris.

The 2015 album "Feast of Friends," an homage to the Doors, marked a turning point in Samy's career. The newspaper Libération said of Thiébault that he "dances somewhere between trance and spiritual communication."

The international tour for "Feast of Friends" was also considerable, covering four continents over the course of one year. The group played at the main festivals and stages in Europe, securing its place with audiences and professionals alike.

Another stage in the journey took place in 2016 with "Rebirth," an in-depth project exploring new compositions by Samy Thiébault written for the quartet. The album deals with the urgency and necessity of melody as a structuring, freeing element in the most modern, personal, and generous form of Jazz possible.

This album was also an opportunity to work and record with the great trumpeter Avishai Cohen. "Rebirth" was released in September 2016 on Gaya Music Production (distributed by Socadisc).

In the wake of the album's critical acclaim, Samy was raised to the level of the "most important, emblematic musicians of his generation" (France Inter) and the album was named "the best Jazz album of the year" (Fip). The album's success has led to shows throughout France (venues include the Olympia, Café de La danse, Festivals de Marciac, Nice, and Sètes) and abroad (China, Korea, Vietnam, Indonesia, West Africa, and more).

This was more than enough to confirm Samy's place among "the greatest Jazzmen of France" (JazzNews).

2018 saw the release of "Caribbean Stories," an album built like a subjective journey through the Caribbean. The saxophonist had fallen in love with the culture of the islands in 2014 during a tour in Venezuela. In her preface to the album, former French Justice Minister Christiane Taubira wrote that "Samy Thiébauld appears to have understood the plasticity of this music. It's varied. It's rarely shrill; it's attentive to where it comes from and it cares for its cultural roots, though not nearly as much as it bears witness to the jolts and blows that brought it to life, to the yawning abyss it comes from, and to the edge of the abyss it continues to frequent, against its will. To the chaos that gave it substance. And to a rumbling serenity." The musicologist Bertrand Dicale added that the album is a "trip to the Caribbean that gives this music its humble nobility of ultimate consolation. And truth."

The album garnered strong critical and public acclaim, winning the "Album Tout Monde" award in 2018 for TSFJazz. The saxophonist made the front cover of the monthly magazine Jazznews and won high praise from a number of publications (three keys in Télérama, a portrait in Libération newspaper, four stars in Jazzmag, top album selection in Le Monde and L'Express newspapers...) Samy's group went on several tours, playing at the major summer festivals in France (Nice, Marciac, Marseille) and abroad in Russia, Hong Kong, Cuba, the United States, and Argentina.

2018 was also a year of intense collaboration for Samy Thiébauld as a sideman; he found himself onstage with Rhoda Scott, Thierry Maillard, Manu Guerrero, and Minino Garay.

In September 2019, Samy Thiébault realized a dream he'd nurtured for over ten years: to write a suite for symphonic orchestra and jazz quintet that would unite 20th-century French music, African-African jazz spirituals from the 1960s, and classical Indian music. Thanks to a powerful connection with the Orchestre Symphonique de Bretagne, conductor Aurélien Azan Zielenski, and sound engineer Philippe Teissier Du Cros – all under the leadership of producer Sébastien Vidal, with whom Samy has worked on his past several albums – the album “Symphonic Tales” was recorded in wonderfully favorable conditions. The album was the start of a new adventure for Samy and his group. Garnering four *Télérama* keys, it was ranked among the five best albums of 2019 in *Le Monde*, *Télérama*, and for *TSFJazz*. It was also qualified as “indispensable” by the magazine *Jazznews*. The album's success earned it a nomination in the Best Album of 2019 category at that year's *Victoires du Jazz*.

The year 2021 will see the release of “Awé!”, an ambitious album recorded at the four corners of the world – Miami, Cuba, France, and São Paulo – and whose influences are as rich as they are varied. It's a subjective pilgrimage along the old slave routes, in colonized lands, with jazz at heart and groove out on the horizon.

Miami is where the saxophonist (selected by the French Embassy of the United States' *French American Jazz Exchange* program) dreamt up this repertoire. There, he played with the finest musicians of the Cuban diaspora: Dafnis Prieto (drummer, composer, winner of the Thelonious Monk Competition and a Grammy Award 2019), the pianist Manuel Valera, Brian Lynch on trumpet (ex-Jazz Messengers, Grammy Award 2020) and Yunion Terry on upright bass. During the same stay, pianist Eric Legnini took part in the adventure. Back in France, the repertoire kept evolving throughout 2020; a string ensemble and chamber orchestra joined the project. The finishing touches are several songs written by Samy Thiébault, which will be played onstage by the special guests he calls upon to join him.

It's an invitation around the world, an invitation to *créolité*, to dance and creativity!

“Awé!” is this music's shout; it's the shout of jazz.