



## Orchestre National de Jazz Shut Up and Dance Review

Album. Released 4 October 2010.

### BBC Review

**Proof that intricately constructed orchestral music need not be a sit down affair.**

Kevin Le Gendre 2010-11-17



Dance and jazz don't often shuffle into the same semantic space these days, so this is an intriguing proposition in more ways than one. Although the title is the name of one of the emblematic house labels of the 90s, it also implies that whosoever vacates their seats to shake a leg, should partake in that crucial activity so often forgotten by music lovers – listening.

One of France's great national institutions, Orchestre National de Jazz has done sterling work since the mid-80s and this latest project, under the artistic direction of Daniel Yvinec, is progressive, bracing big band music for ears as well as feet. It is

a worthy successor to 2009's *Around Robert Wyatt*, an intelligent re-imagining of the Soft Machine man's oeuvre. With the charts of John Hollenbeck, drummer and composer-in-chief of the much-feted Claudia Quintet, on their music stands, ONJ's five winds and five-piece electric rhythm section again have rich source material at their disposal, not least because Hollenbeck has mused at length on the notion of groove, dance and movement.

This has yielded compositions that strike an artful balance between engaging rather than monotonous ostinato figures and astute changes in harmony, tempo or meter, which is, of course, something that has historical precedents from Ellington to Don Ellis. But, as is often the case in his Claudia work, Hollenbeck has a real knack for creating mobile thickets of counterpoint and interlocking gamelan-like motifs that give the work a kind of omni-directional quality: there is sideways as well as forward motion.

ONJ executes the material brilliantly with soloists such as saxophonist Matthieu Metzger and pianist Eve Risser lacing their statements with deftly handled electronics that enhance the general hypnosis of the scores. The last point to make is that Gilles Olivesi and Boris Darley's superlative engineering gives the music a warmth and thickness that matches the best records in techno or hip hop, with the sub-bass tones in particular jumping out of the speakers. Proof that intricately constructed orchestral music need not be a sit down affair.

# THE BUFFALO NEWS

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## MUSIC » Disc reviews

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### **Daniel Yviniac and John Hollenbeck, "Shut Up and Dance" performed by the Orchestre National de Jazz**

*[Bee Jazz, two discs]*

**4 stars**

### **Orchestra National de Jazz "Around Robert Wyatt" conducted by Daniel Yviniac, arranged by Vincent Artaud**

*[Bee Jazz, two discs]*

**3 and 1/2 stars**

Ecclesiastes was wrong. There is something new under the sun. To wit, a gorgeous new kind of orchestral jazz from Europe that takes the art of jazz orchestration and composition way beyond what is commonly heard from American jazz orchestras. It would, frankly, be impossible without the kind of economic support that the great European jazz orchestras get from governments, radio, etc. But the result here on "Shut Up and Dance" is that one of the greatest living jazz composers John Hollenbeck of the Claudia Quintet (listen to "Eternal Interlude" by Hollenbeck's Large Ensemble from 2009) has produced one of the greatest jazz discs of 2011 by large measure. If the title leads you to expect some sort of pop dance music, forget it. This is music that, as its publicity says, includes "a ping pong ball bounding across piano wire, miscellaneous objects mistreated by computer software, instrument keys, hands rubbing, PVC tubes morphing into melodies." It is unmistakably jazz but is fully cognizant with the most advanced music of both the classical and pop worlds, and all played at the highest level by Yviniac's French orchestra. "Around Robert Wyatt" is a distinctly lesser effort built on the music of the legendary European omni-fusion fantasia band, Soft Machine. It is "Shut Up and Dance," though that fully convinces you that Hollenbeck is a jazz composer who has taken the next step in jazz after the first successive steps in jazz orchestration beyond Duke Ellington were taken by Gil Evans and Maria Schneider. *(Jeff Simon)*

<http://www.buffalonews.com/entertainment/gusto/music/disc-reviews/article407825.ece>

# Orchestre National de France/John Hollenbeck: Shut Up and Dance – review

(BeeJazz)

4 / 5

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John Fordham

guardian.co.uk, Thursday 21 October 2010 22.00 BST

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## Orchestre National De Jazz

### Shut up and dance

Bee Jazz

2010

For much of this thoughtful and ambitious double album you might be wondering where the "orchestre" is, or for that matter the dance grooves summoned by the title. But, as France's national jazz band under director/composer Daniel Yvinec showed with their Robert Wyatt tribute last year, direct routes aren't their game. This repertoire is John Hollenbeck's, the American drummer/composer famous for steering one of the most original contemporary jazz groups, the Claudia Quintet. Yvinec's musicians similarly embrace folk, contemporary-classical forms, jazz-rock themes that recall Frank Zappa, and fragments that grow into richly coloured, mobile shapes. The pieces showcase soloists, from Antonin-Tri Hoang's bass clarinet over Frisell/Morricone guitar sounds, to hovering classical-choral effects for pianist Eve Risser, to arrhythmic dances for tenor saxophonist Rémi Dumoulin, and a percussion tone-poem to fade out on. You might expect a state-backed band to be more conservative, but this group is as boldly independent as the Claudia Quintet itself.



## Orchestre National de Jazz: Shut Up and Dance

By John Garratt *21 July 2011*

PopMatters Associate Music Editor



Bland music may cause the listener to come up short on adjectives, but exceptional music can totally rob your mouth of convenient genre names and labels. The latter is what's going on with Orchestre National de Jazz's *Shut Up and Dance* project, a sideways nod to modern big band featuring the compositions of John Hollenbeck. Under the current direction of Daniel Yvinec, this French ensemble tailor-fits each tribute it takes on, and *Shut Up and Dance* is all the more inspiring for being all over the map. Modes, moods and chops are plentiful as only superb writing and arranging will allow. It may be technically described as big band homage, but this recording is tied to nothing. And if there is any justice in the world, this album will make everyone forget about Paula Abdul's album of the same name.

Rating: 8

<http://www.popmatters.com/review/142244-orchestre-national-de-jazz-shut-up-and-dance/>

## Extended Analysis

# Orchestre National De Jazz: Shut Up And Dance

By **JEFF DAYTON-JOHNSON**, Published: January 13, 2011 | 12,062 views



Daniel Yvinec's first foray as artistic director of France's National Jazz Orchestra, a tribute to English rock oddball Robert Wyatt (Around Robert Wyatt, Bee Jazz, 2009) drew well-deserved critical praise. To some, however, it sounded more like a pop masterpiece than appropriate fare for state-sponsored guardians of the jazz repertoire. "Is this an ONJ?" sniffed pianist and former ONJ director Antoine Herve (class of 1987-1989) in a magazine interview. "You could start by removing the 'J...'" The stakes were thus high for Yvinec to turn in a more reverential set the second time round.

Percussionist and composer Hollenbeck, who composed all the pieces herein, meanwhile, could stand, if anything, to let his hair down. His records have been praised to the skies but skirt ever closer to the seriousness of contemporary classical composition.

The Yvinec-Hollenbeck collaboration on Shut Up And Dance is a formidable achievement for many reasons, but not least among them is that it manages to restore a luster of seriousness to Yvinec even as it lends a tinge of whimsy to Hollenbeck.

The two-disc set is not the backbeat-driven funkfest that the title might imply. Dance is an overriding concern of the material, and you may well be motivated to motor-vate as you listen to the majority of the pieces on Shut Up And Dance. But Hollenbeck takes a much broader view of dance: without being ethnically or historically specific, the compositions evoke dance in its ceremonial or religious aspects more than as a courtly prelude to getting down.

And the principal building block of the performances is percussion: long complex rhythmic lines, overlapping and interlocking. In this way, Hollenbeck's compositions resemble the work of Steve Reich and Philip Glass, or the synthesis of Reich's and Glass's classical compositions and the good-foot virtuosity of James Brown effected by Nik Bärtsch. As with those musicians, the repetitive rhythmic patterns establish an almost pictorial stillness.

But unlike Reich, Glass and Bartsch, Yvinec and Hollenbeck come off as less mechanistic and more living and breathing: there are solos and improvisation and signs of life amidst the ritual. In this respect, this record is a distant relative of Duke Ellington's "Afrique," from his masterpiece *The Afro-Eurasian Eclipse* (Original Jazz Classics, 1971): a fundamentally drum-led composition with the full resources of the big band deployed to drive the point home. (Take that, doubting Thomases who worry that Yvinec's young charges are not getting a grounding in the classics of the genre.)

Nowhere is this mixed musical heritage more clear on the ONJ record than "Praya Dance," a ferociously multilayered percussion piece that has the immediacy of an ethnomusical field recording, accented by flautist Joce Mienniel's aggressive and ingenious solos. "Flying Dream," meanwhile, is built around a honking saxophone pulse that could stand in for a ceremonial instrument leading celebrants around a fire. Other pieces are less bluntly beat-driven: the wistful "Melanie Dance," for example, or the electric bass-led "Life Still."

The record's highlight is "Shaking Peace," which reminds us that, in jazz at least, the piano is a percussion instrument, too. As dance, "Shaking Peace" is the dance of a spirit possessed; as music, it's the aural equivalent of a pointillist painting, thousands of precisely delineated constituent points coalescing to form a soft and impressionistic visual field. Here, a never-ending flurry of rapidly-struck piano notes, seconded by hard- to-identify staccato and glissando effects by a host of other instruments, describes an elegiac melody. The paradoxes are many here: the band is playing very fast, yet the impression is one of glacial deliberation. As if to remind us what "Shaking Peace" is made of, Risser takes a solo midway through the piece, constituted likewise by rapid- fire piano notes, but during the solo they sound like rapid-fire piano notes, and not like the threads of a rich tapestry. Toward the piece's climax, the ONJ throws in what sound like alarm clocks and a jackhammer, underscoring the paradoxical relationship between the performance's materials—hammered, metallic, percussive—and the oceanic lushness of the ensemble sound.

So it doesn't sound like Ellington or Basie, not entirely, but "Shaking Peace" and the rest of this album recall to mind just why the big band remains a vital medium for jazz expression.

[http://www.allaboutjazz.com/orchestre-national-de-jazz-shut-up-and-dance-by-jeff-dayton-johnson.php#.U-vMEyhkI\\_s](http://www.allaboutjazz.com/orchestre-national-de-jazz-shut-up-and-dance-by-jeff-dayton-johnson.php#.U-vMEyhkI_s)

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## Orchestre National de Jazz Shut Up and Dance

Bee Jazz

By [Perry Tannenbaum](#)

With frequently changing personnel and leadership, ONJ has been remarkably chameleonic during its 25 years, sometimes, as when Paolo Damiani was at the helm for *Charmediterranéen* in 2003, veering from idiom to idiom as we moved from track to track. The French band is no less eclectic under its current leader, Daniel Yvinec, but each of his projects, *Around Robert Wyatt* in 2009 and his newest two-disc effort with music written for the group by John Hollenbeck, sticks far more religiously on course. A techno stretch of the imagination is necessary to hear *Shut Up* as a dance album, but the title is catchier than “10 Little Concertos,” a more accurate description of what’s happening here.

After a brief 29-second overture revs up the electronics, Hollenbeck apportions one new piece to every member of the band. A mini-concerto for orchestra—with the band playing tuned percussion tubes—pops up at the end of the first CD, this “Boom” melting into “Bob Walk,” a tribute to Bob Brookmeyer written for Matthieu Metzger. Except for drummer Yoann Serra and electric bassist Sylvain Daniel, all the musicians are listed as playing at least three instruments.

Quadrupling on alto, soprano and MIDI saxophones plus trombone, Metzger’s solo instrument is the toughest ID. He switches as readily as Hollenbeck switches tempos, the chart floating, swinging, rocking and freaking. On the other hand, “Shaking Peace” aptly describes the exquisite volatility of the arrangement showcasing pianist Eve Risser. “Tongs of Joy” is a sunnier vehicle for Vincent Lafont’s synthesizer, while “Praya Dance,” for Joce Mienniel, is indeed the dancingest piece in the set, recalling the bacchante approach to flute exemplified by Jeremy Steig, Roland Kirk and Ian Anderson.

Originally published in [November 2011](#)



## John Hollenbeck's *Shut Up and Dance*

By Fred Kaplan • Posted: May 20, 2011



*Shut Up and Dance*, on the French label Bee Jazz, should catapult John Hollenbeck into the pantheon of living big-band composers, along with Maria Schneider, Bob Brookmeyer, Jim McNeely, and (if his debut works are matched by what's to come) Darcy James Argue, among perhaps a very few others.

I've praised some of Hollenbeck's earlier albums in this space, especially his Large Ensemble's *Eternal Interludes* and his Claudia Quintet's *Royal Toast*, but I have to say I admired them more than I liked them. His arrangements were heady, his feel for harmony nearly peerless, but some of the pieces were a bit parched. Not so with this one, as the title suggests. The project started in 2009, when Daniel Yvinec, director of the 10-piece Orchestre National de Jazz, commissioned Hollenbeck to compose a sheaf of music for his band, with two conditions: he had to write 10 pieces, each giving space for one of his musicians to play a solo; and all the pieces had to be written in some sort of dance rhythm.

Hollenbeck traveled to Paris, spent time with the musicians, and came up with this marvel. It's packed with all the complex harmonies and knotty melody lines of his earlier material—and it swings like crazy, though not always in familiar "dance hall" fashion; these are dance rhythms that Merce Cunningham and Duke Ellington might both have liked in their fashion.

And the band! I've never heard the Orchestre National de Jazz before, but I'm going to check out the catalog. These guys are tight and limber all at once, virtuosic without dipping into a drop of academicism. The sound quality is also very good: tonally true, airily ambient (check out the piano's bloom), with only a little compression on the drum kit.

One caveat: This is a double-CD, and the first disc is more consistently riveting than the second. Even so, check this out!