

SOLO In Spirit

Claude Tchamitchian: double bass & composition



(c) Christophe Charpenel

« In Spirit » is the third solo project from renowned double bassist and composer Claude Tchamitchian, a major figure in contemporary European jazz. This new work is a testament to his lifelong commitment to exploring new musical territories and developing unique languages specific to the double bass.

For the first time in his career, Tchamitchian approached his solo work by imagining the music in advance, rather than discovering it progressively through the creative process. This new approach led him to fundamentally reconsider the very nature of his instrument. During this journey, he was offered the extraordinary opportunity to perform with one of the double basses that belonged to the legendary Jean-François Jenny-Clark—a serendipitous event that coincided with the 20th anniversary of Jenny-Clark's passing, adding a deep sense of legacy and homage to the project.

A Journey Rooted in Innovation and Intimacy

Claude Tchamitchian's relationship with the double bass is marked by constant innovation and introspection. His very first album as a leader, « Jeux d'enfants » (1992), was a solo double bass recording that laid the foundations for a personal universe—lyrical, gestural, and intimate—built upon a profound physical and emotional understanding of the instrument. Over the decades, Tchamitchian has continuously developed this introspective solo practice, treating it as a privileged laboratory for experimenting with new forms, techniques, and languages.

His solo performances are a unique blend of sensual expressiveness and formal rigor, where spontaneous narrative meets architectural abstraction, and where ancient traditions intersect with modern sophistication. Alone with his instrument, Tchamitchian seeks a delicate balance between emotional abandon and technical virtuosity, forging a deeply personal and ambitious musical language. Central to his approach is the notion of song—a melodic thread that brings coherence and direction to his improvisations.

Bridging Traditions, Creating Dialogue

« In Spirit » is more than a solo album; it is a bridge between erudite music and popular traditions, a journey through inner landscapes, and a celebration of the power of improvisation. Tchamitchian's rare ability to enter into a true dialogue with his instrument brings the double bass to life in a way that is both intimate and powerfully resonant. Each performance is a vibrant, moving experience, as the music emerges from a total commitment of body and spirit.

An Artist's Evolution

Born in Paris in 1960, Claude Tchamitchian grew up in a musically open environment, discovering jazz, rock, and classical music from a young age. His fascination with the double bass began in his late teens, leading him to an autodidactic journey that quickly turned professional. After formative years in Orléans and Avignon, he became a sought-after collaborator on the French and European jazz scenes, working with a wide array of artists and ensembles.

Tchamitchian's career is distinguished by his versatility and leadership. He is not only an exceptional instrumentalist but also a charismatic bandleader and a visionary composer. His group Lousadzak, founded in 1993, has been a vehicle for his orchestral imagination, blending influences from free jazz, Armenian music, and contemporary composition. In parallel, he has founded the record label Emouvance, supporting a vibrant community of innovative musicians.

A Rich and Diverse Musical Path

Throughout his career, Tchamitchian has collaborated with leading figures in jazz and improvised music, participated in cross-cultural projects, and composed original music for dance and theatre. His discography reflects a relentless curiosity and a desire to push boundaries, from intimate solo explorations to ambitious large ensemble works.

« In Spirit » stands as a culmination of this journey—a deeply personal statement that invites listeners to share in the artist’s ongoing search for new forms of expression, connection, and beauty through the double bass.

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