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**ADRIEN VARACHAUD QUARTET - KIRK LIGHTSEY - DARRYL HALL - FAMOUODOU DON MOYE - FEAT. ARCHIE SHEPP**  
**«TIME TO SEE THE LIGHT» ALBUM DISPONIBLE LE 23 FEVRIER 2024.**

### Adrien Varachaud: a story of encounters

Adrien Varachaud presents his second album, "Time to see the light", and has brought together four musician friends for this recording, which bears witness to a beautiful story of friendship and complicity: Kirk Lightsey, with whom Adrien has often played since he met him in 2007, Darryl Hall who has made a name for himself on the French music scene, Famoudou Don Moye, the famous drummer of the Art Ensemble of Chicago and a friend of Lightsey's, and Archie Shepp himself, as exceptional guest, without his saxophone but with his voice, and God knows he sings beautifully! The sense of complicity, and of togetherness tinged with fraternity, is perceptible throughout the session.

For this recording, Adrien decided to leave his tenor saxophone in its case and play only the soprano, which gives unity and coherence to a judiciously chosen repertoire that opens with Witchi-Tai-To, a hymn to the "first nations" composed by Jim Pepper in 1971: a splendid idea. Alongside some original themes, there is a lovely composition by Wayne Shorter, a standard, Temptation, created by Big Crosby in the 1933 movie Going Hollywood, and in the midst of it all, seamlessly, the powerful voice of Archie Shepp. He begins with Nobody Knows, the famous negro spiritual often performed as a duet with pianist Horace Parlan, followed by a lesser-known song written in 1942 by Billy Strayhorn for Duke Ellington's orchestra with singer Herb Jeffries. It is worth comparing the two baritones whose vocal ranges are similar, one more crooner though and the other rougher.

Is Duke's 1962 quartet version with John Coltrane not a source of inspiration for Adrien?

In the same spirit, three excerpts from a 2019 trio concert recorded in Berlin with Kirk Lightsey and Darryl Hall complete and enrich the disc.

Choosing the soprano gives a feeling of clarity, like that of the early morning: clarity of note, of phrase, of discourse and of improvisations that develop the melody and bring it to a conclusion. Adrien Varachaud prefers a fairly linear but contrasting style based on long clearly articulated phrases to technical displays. He plays with sound and amplitude to enrich the melody, and is perfectly supported by his companions and their sense of singing that creates a unity among them. Thanks to an almost innate coherence among the four musicians and the "presence" of Archie Shepp, one can only marvel at this music that is forever modern, called jazz.

Adrien Varachaud, a committed artist, is one of them. He has chosen his path and his camp, and he sticks to it: that of the truth of jazz. To do this, he has drawn on the best sources.

Like the jazzmen who have passed on their roots (blues and gospel songs) from generation to generation, Adrien Varachaud is part of this great tradition initiated by renowned Black musicians, often much older than he is, who form a large family where he has been welcomed. He became totally immersed in the sound and soul of Afro-American culture, a unique experience and rare situation, and a formidable adventure for a musician of his generation.

**Jean Buzelin**

*« Making this recording was fun and a great pleasure for me to record with two of my heroes of music since the 1960s: Kirk Lightsey and Archie Shepp... Thanks Adrien! »* **Famoudou Don Moye**

*« I really enjoyed playing with Adrien in his second record and with my favorite trio, Don Moye and Darryl Hall, not forgetting Archie Shepp's unforgettable voice. Thanks Adrien for your great new sound on the saxophone. »*

**Kirk Lightsey**



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## Biography

Adrien Varachaud was born in Strasbourg (France) in 1977. He made up his mind to become a professional saxophone player after listening to Hal Singer play at the Café des Anges in Strasbourg in 1994. A few years later Archie Shepp became Adrien's teacher and his friend and introduced him to well-known musicians like Mal Waldron and Ted Curson...

In the summer of 2002, Adrien went to Dakar to study and play with famous drummer Doudou N'Diaye Rose, an opportunity for him to improve his skill and develop his own sound and later he visited Abdellah El Gourd (Master Gnaoua musician) to study and play with him and his Gnaoua group.

In 2007, at the age of 30, he caught the attention of the Alibi Jazz Club's manager and set up his own groups, first a trio with pianist Katy Roberts and trumpet player Rasul Siddik, and then a duet with pianist Tom McClung.

He set up the Unity 5tet in 2009 and gave a performance in Paris. His first record "Strange Horns" was widely acclaimed by critics: *"His music openly recalls blues, it is full of rage and lyricism. His unconventional career which owes nothing to academic tuition displays an extraordinary craving for playing. This first record\* is really a master stroke"*. (Jazz Hot - september 2011)

His drums player, Douglas Sides, invited him to play with saxophonist Peter King and pianist Steve Melling in London, and later, he was invited by Barry Altschul, another famous drummer, to join the "Fab Trio" (Joe Fonda, Barry Altschul, and Billy Bang) for a gig in Basel.

In 2011, Adrien Varachaud was invited by Hal Singer, a living jazz memory, to join his 5tet for a gig in Chatou and the two saxophone players met on a regular basis after that. Hal Singer became Adrien's mentor, in the same way as Archie Shepp was his teacher. As an open-minded musician, Adrien is not afraid of taking risks. He plays bold phrases in the grand tradition of Afro-American jazz, and is very open and available.

He has just recorded his new album, "Time to see the light," with pianist Kirk Lightsey whom he has been playing with since 2007, bassist Darryl Hall, Famadou Don Moye, the Chicago Art Ensemble drummer, and a very special guest, Archie Shepp in person!

**Arlette Singer (text updated by Jean Buzelin)**

\* Unity Quintet "Strange Horns" - AV001

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**SOCADISC**

## JAZZ, an essential coming together

### JAZZ/LIVING MEMORIES: ADRIEN VARACHAUD



Hard to say that Saxophonist Adrien Varachaud clutters up the record shops - the ones that remain - however a 2009 album as leader should have caused a sensation. "Strange Horn" is just as mysterious a title as the Unity Quintet he has brought together. A music centred on the unity of jazz memories. The second album will be a milestone in 2024 - Happy New Year! - with the perhaps premonitory title "Time to see the light." The guest of honour, Archie Shepp, this time vocalist, once again expresses the coming together of all types of jazz.

With his soprano, Adrien and his star quartet - Kirk Lightsey, piano, Darryl Hall, double bass, and Don Moye, drums and percussion – chart a luminous trail. The embers are just waiting to be rekindled... The libraries carried by these musicians are just waiting to be consulted to reveal other treasures, other understandings, other openings. A classical music that has its roots in suffering, in anguish and in the happiness of creating together a music born to overturn all the mountains that separate human beings.

Adrien plays with all these references to build a road towards making his (our) dreams of universal music come true. Apart from Archie Shepp, the custodian of most of the history and memory of jazz, Don Moye represents the Art Ensemble of Chicago - their appearance in Paris was a major event in the aftermath of May 1968 - and beyond that the AACM, intended as an association to open up new horizons that still exists. Kirk Lightsey has taken part in a host of groups, like Darryl Hall, and the quintet offers a synthesis of a music that manages to renew itself.

Don't miss it. Don't miss this album, or you'll regret it - even if you never know.

Nicolas Beniès

« Time to See the Light », Adrien Varachaud Quartet, Jazz Family/Socadisc

Ce contenu a été publié dans **Jazz** par **Nicolas Beniès**, et marqué avec **Adrien Varachaud**, **Jazz Family**, **Socadisc**, **time to see the light**. Mettez-le en favori avec son **permalien**.



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# Le Monde

### Adrien Varachaud Quartet

KIRK LIGHTSEY DARRYL HALL  
FAMOUDOU DON MOYE

featuring

ARCHIE SHEPP



Time to see the light

Adrien Varachaud Quartet's "Time to See the Light" album cover. JAZZ FAMILY/SOCADISC

### Album selection, March 1, 2024

Strasbourg-born soprano saxophonist Adrien Varachaud presents an astonishingly natural album, *Time to See the Light*. Varachaud has earned the trust of his prestigious elders: Kirk Lightsey (piano), Darryl Hall (double bass) and Famoudou Don Moye (historic percussionist). A luxury combo with Archie Shepp as guest star. A simple story of friendship. Right in the middle of a tastefully assembled repertoire, Shepp sings two songs, including *My Little Brown Book* (by Billy Strayhorn). Around him, standards alternate with personal compositions (*Subtle Touch*, by Darryl Hall; *Habiba*, by Kirk Lightsey; nothing by Famoudou Don Moye, as he composes from A to Z on his drums). Indian-sign-style opening: the fascinating *Witchi Tai To*, which his grandfather of Creek origin had blown to the Native American saxophonist Jim Pepper II. An album recorded in all loyalty by one of those discreet essentials without whom jazz wouldn't be, Adrien Varachaud, with his very peaceful Afro-American guard, is a rare thing. Total respect.

**Francis Marmande**

## Adrien Varachaud, la lumière et le flambeau

Mardi 27 février 2024

▶ ÉCOUTER (59 MIN)



Famoudou Don Moye, Darryl Hall, Kirk Lightsey, Adrien Varachaud, Archie Shepp - © Philippe Levy-Stab

Publicité



Provenant du podcast

Open jazz

CONTACTER L'ÉMISSION



**Adrien Varachaud nous présente son deuxième album « Time to See the Light » et a réuni quatre amis musiciens pour cet enregistrement qui témoigne d'une belle histoire d'amitié et de complicité. Parution chez Jazz Family / Socadisc.**

Publicité



- Adrien Varachaud à la Une

By Alex Dutilh and Emmanuelle Lacaze

<https://www.radiofrance.fr/francemusique/podcasts/open-jazz/adrien-varachaud-la-lumiere-et-le-flambeau-3097570>