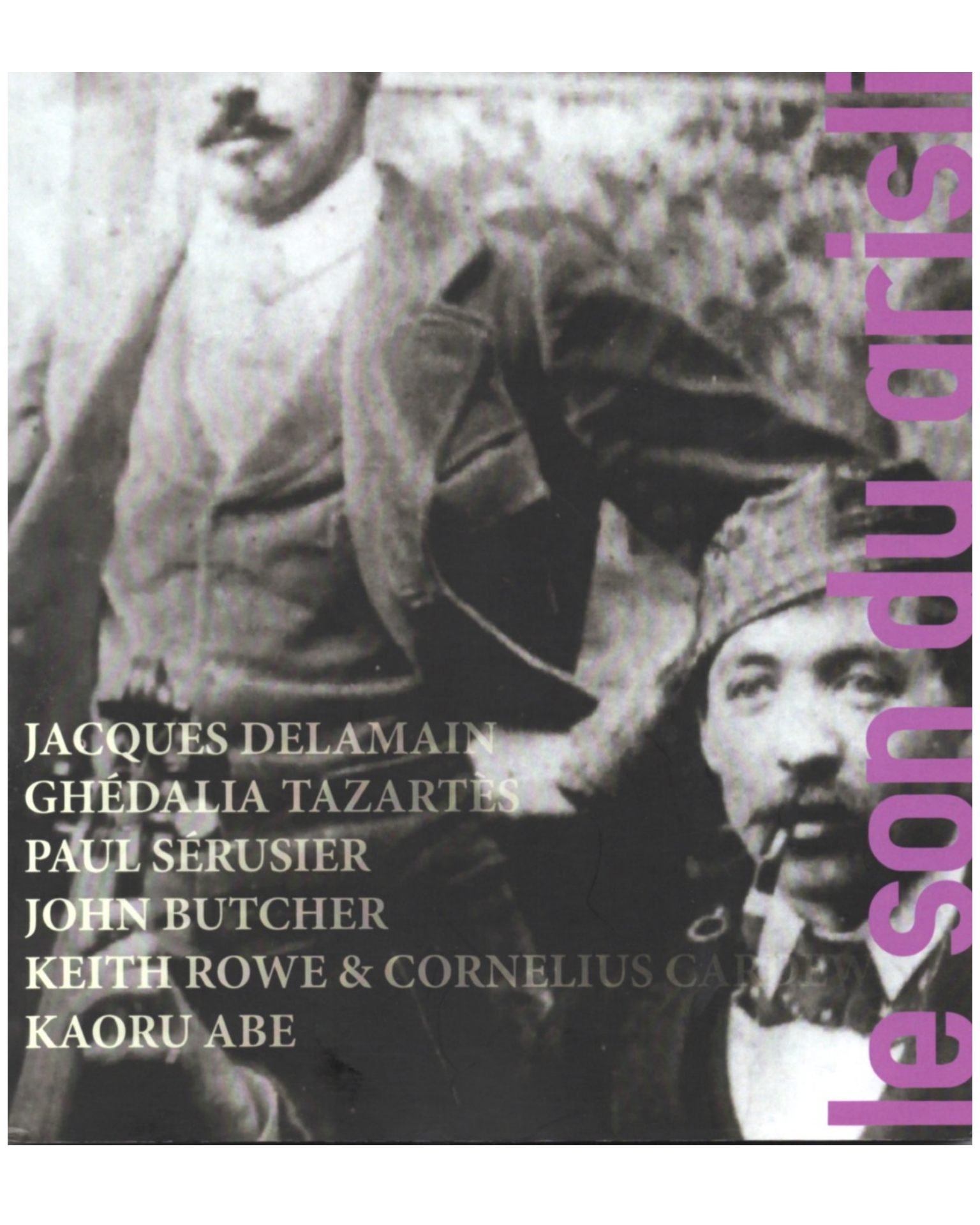
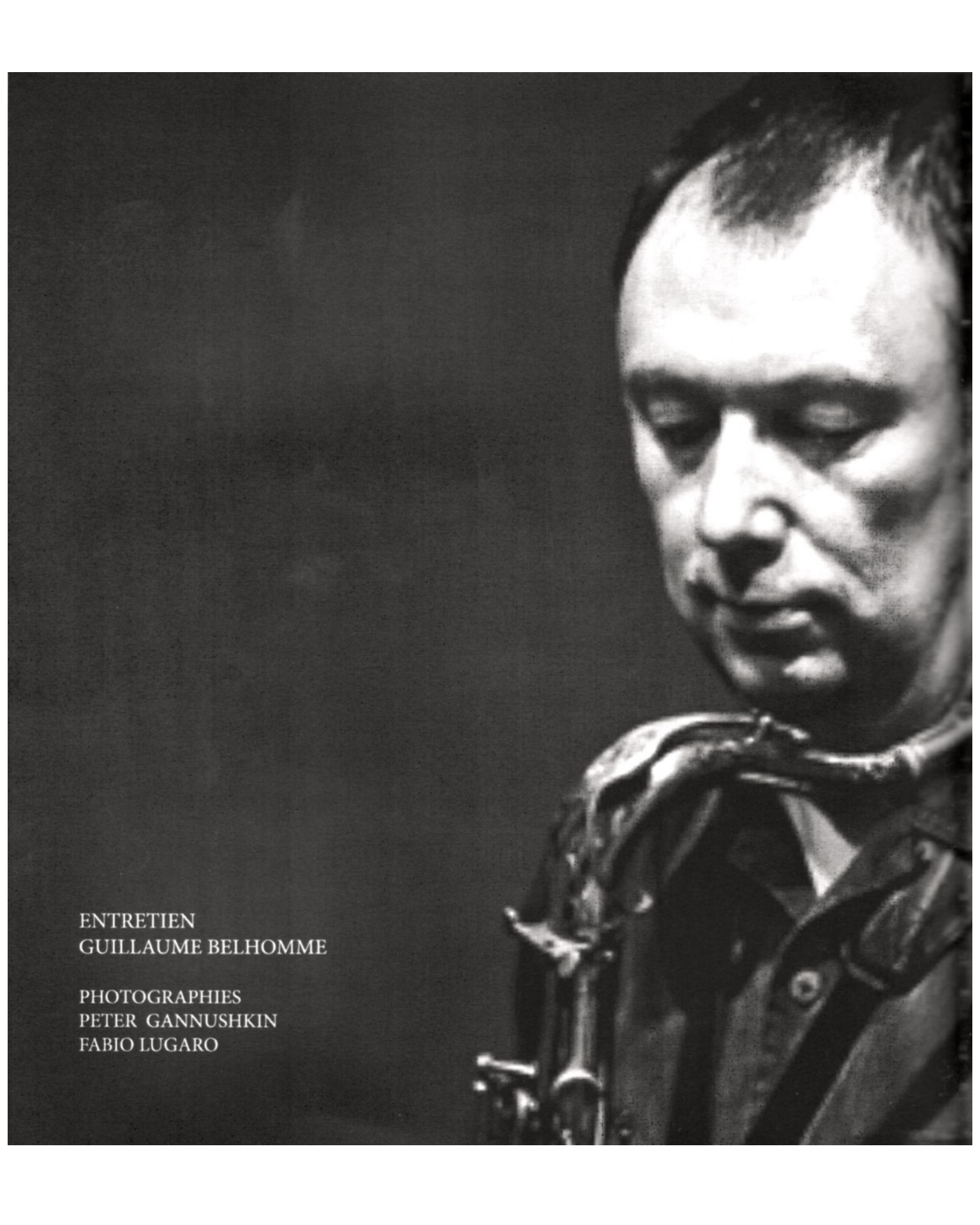




JACQUES DELAMAIN
GHÉDALIA TAZARTÈS
PAUL SÉRUSIER
JOHN BUTCHER
KEITH ROWE & CORNELIUS CARDEW
KAORU ABE

le son du arisli



ENTRETIEN
GUILLAUME BELHOMME

PHOTOGRAPHIES
PETER GANNUSHKIN
FABIO LUGARO

ENGLISH VERSION

What did you listen to when you began to play saxophone? What were your first musical experiences in bands? Let's start early. I was lying in bed, as a child, off school, a little sick. The light bulb was worked by a long string from the ceiling. I remember stretching and twanging it to try to get notes that fitted with what was on the radio and thinking «it'd be great to play an instrument». A tortuous journey through recorders, guitars, piano, and a reconstructed harmonium led to me to the saxophone, which I bought when I left home at 19, paid for by working nights in TipTop Bakeries.

But, early listening, well, around '63 our Saturday night baby-sitter (a secretary from Dellaganas, the printers where my father worked) asked me who my favourite Beatle was. I didn't know what she was talking about, so she brought us some singles and my Mother helpfully bought our first record player. So, for the next few years it was the excitement of following The Beatles. Then, as a teenager, listening to the Mike Raven and John Peel shows meant a journey across time, race and culture from Blind Willie McTell and Bessie Smith to Soft Machine and Tyrannosaurus Rex - albeit missing out most of what came in-between.

My bass playing brother, Phil, started getting Jazz records from the library, and in '74 we went to the Lambeth New Music Society summer school where I had piano lessons with Stan Tracy and encounters with players like Mike Osbourne and Harry Miller. I was soon going to a lot of London gigs by them and the likes of John Surman, John Stevens, Lol Coxhill, Keith Tippett, Tony Oxley - mostly UK jazz with added extras like Sonny Rollins and Ruffus Harley at Ronnie Scott's also in '74, when it seemed perfectly normal to have bagpipes in the band.

Around the same time I was playing keyboards, and writing, in an avant-rock group formed at Surrey University and playing saxophone in various jazz groups. In the manner of our London heroes, but also playing standards. We invited Don Rendell

to join us for a gig long before we should have dared, and he was extremely gracious and helpful.

At the same time, enthusiasm for the sounds and ideas of Stockhausen, Cage, and the post-war avant-garde led to experimenting with a few other adventurous souls, like Chris Burn, on something not far from free-improvisation. Then discovering Derek Bailey's music and thinking was important. It promised a new, almost open road - which I guess I'm still travelling.

What are the musicians you're listening to, nowadays? Listening to and enjoying or just listening to? Some listening is for curiosity and/or research and some for pleasure - with luck they overlap. The last 3 records I've paid money for were Philip Thomas' 5CD "Morton Feldman Piano", the 14CD Bob Dylan "Rolling Thunder Revue" and "The Music of the Ottoman-American Diaspora, 1916-30". All great.

Then recently I've particularly enjoyed two Sophia Jernberg live solos, "The Complete Lester Young on Verve," Barre Philips (whilst playing with him), and Annea Lockwood, Roza Eskenazi, Dewey Redman's solo on "The Garden of Souls", Spill (Buck/Mayas), and Excavated Shellac "Reeds".

Would you say the musicians you're listening to share with you a particular interest for sound/sounds and not only for music? I'm too close to it to see the patterns - but I'm mostly interested in sounds behind which I can hear the human creator. Which, itself, is my rough definition of music. But sounds with no direct human creator can become music through the attention of the listener ... so I'm not that fond of definitions.

Then, we've published a little John Butcher hors-serie in which we, Guillaume Tarche and I, were talking about "sculptures on feedback" and were insisting on the importance of space/environment in your music. Are these two points still important for you nowadays? It's the uniqueness of every situation that is important to me. The rest is a question of degree. Space - how much? - what does it do to the sound? - how does it affect the listener? - can the music "fit" with the space? - what does it ask about the nature of performance?

As for feedback, there are so many loops. The player and their history, the player and the instrument, the instrument and the environment, the player and other players, the music and the audience and - my speciality - a saxophone and it's amplification.

How do you see your “musical trip” since 2009 to nowadays?

Leave home - go to airport/station - travel for a day - do gig - go to airport/station - travel for a day - return home - repeat ad infinitum.

There's about 50 people around the world that it means a lot for me to be able to work with. Over the years some leave that select group and some new colleagues enter. It's ever changing and, consequently, so is the music. New and Old sounds/ideas/places/situations/people always interacting and evolving. If that wasn't the case why would anyone want to do this for decades? It's collaborative creativity as a way of life, where you're forced to travel both into yourself and out of yourself.

More specifically: Joe McPhee at The Hill, site-specific with a new partner..... Rhodri Davies at Brønshøj Watertower, site-specific with an old colleague a one-off trio with Barre Phillips and Ståle Liavik Solberg, new partners more than 40 years apart first time duos with Matt Shipp, Kaja Draksler, Keiji Haino, David Toop, Okkyung Lee. What I'm getting at is the extraordinary interaction across generations and cultures that is the lifeblood of this way of making music.

Equally important are the special possibilities of long-term relationships..... my new trio with old friends John Edwards

and Mark Sanders - projects with Gino Robair, Eddie Prévost, and Andy Moor that stretch through the years.

Improvisation is the best method, but since writing “somethingtobesaid” I've thought more about what it means to “compose” yet keep the player at the heart of the music. As you know, my essay “Freedom and Sound” views their distinction as very fuzzy and in the last 10 years I've done more explicit composition for others. At the moment ideas for a commission for 15 players at HCMF 2020 is rattling around somewhere in the back of my head.

The longest piece of For Drunk on Dreams is called Chaos is the spectre. Could it be the first commandment of the musician improvising?

The title was stolen from a phrase in David Toop's book «Into the Maelstrom» - which is by far the best book yet written on improvisation.

He writes «Chaos is the spectre haunting free improvisation» but as part of a nuanced reflection on chaos, anarchy and freedom.

But I also think fear of the opposite - obsessive order and discipline - can make us value the creative stimulation of some chaos in our lives and music.

We need the spectre - and, as usual, it's a matter of degree.