

DOSSIER DE PRÉSENTATION 2025



Grand
Ensemble
Koa

PRESENTATION



GRAND ENSEMBLE KOA

ALFRED VILAYLECK : ARTISTIC DIRECTION, COMPOSITION, BASS

CAROLINE SENTIS : VOICE, VOCALS

RÉMI FOX : SOPRANO SAXOPHONE

ARMEL COURRÉE : ALTO AND BARITONE SAXOPHONES

JÉRÔME DUFOUR : TENOR SAXOPHONE

PASCAL BOUVIER : TROMBONE

DANIEL MOREAU : PIANO, KEYBOARDS

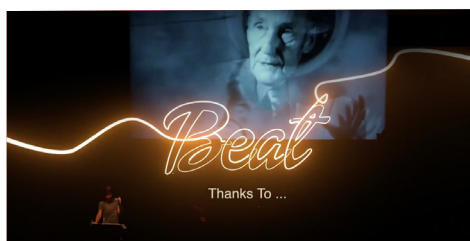
JULIEN GRÉGOIRE : DRUMS

History of the Band:

The Grand Ensemble Koa is an eight-member group performing high-energy electric jazz, blending sophisticated writing with powerful groove, luminous pop-inspired vocals, and explosive improvisations, with creations built around socially engaged literary texts.**

It was founded in 2008 by bassist and composer Alfred Vilayleck. At the same time, the musicians of the group created the Collectif Koa in Montpellier, allowing them to share numerous performing experiences and decisive artistic encounters—particularly within Serge Lazarevitch's jazz class, where they met between 2005 and 2008. They also developed workshops and small-scale creative projects with artists such as Steve Coleman, Ari Hoenig, Aka Moon, Marc Ducret, Julien Lourau, Jim Black, Dave Liebman, Magic Malik, and Maak Spirit.

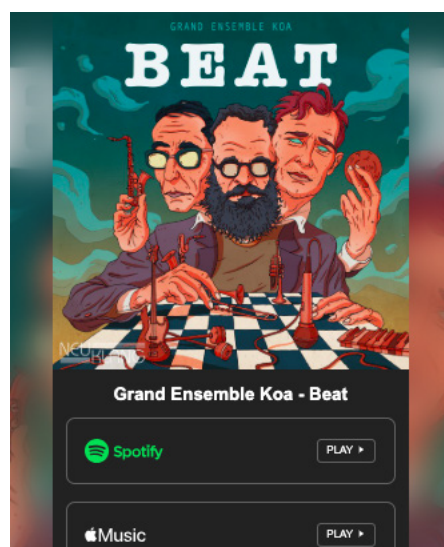
The music written by Alfred Vilayleck and performed by the Grand Ensemble Koa is clearly the result of long-term work around the musical concepts the group explored together, with a lineup that has remained almost unchanged since its beginnings.



«Thanks To» - BEAT



«Castelvania» - LA DANSE DES INSOUHMIS



LISTEN GRAND ENSEMBLE KOA

In 2010, the Grand Ensemble Koa worked on a creation inspired by Alfred Jarry's Ubu-Roi, combining contemporary musical composition, satirical theater with actor Xavier Besson in a key role, and the use of soundpainting. The album **Koa-Roi**, recorded at Studio La Buissonne, was released at the end of 2012 and was named "Jazz Revelation Album" by Jazzmag in February 2013. Pascal Rozat wrote: "A fully realized first opus, striking in its coherence."

In 2013, the Grand Ensemble Koa created **Ahimsa**, a repertoire inspired by Indian non-violence culture, which was notably performed in July 2014 at the Festival Radio France Montpellier. The album was released in 2015, and the ensemble performed for the album release at Le Carreau du Temple in Paris, including a collaboration with Olivier Benoit's ONJ.

In 2015, the ensemble also collaborated with the Belgian collective Maak Spirit, led by Laurent Blondiau, on a project titled Koa Meet Määk, which premiered at the Festival Musiques au Présent in Narbonne in July. They also worked with Marc Ducret for a short-term creation.

In 2017, the Grand Ensemble Koa evolved by integrating vocalist Caroline Sentis and engaging with texts and poems from the Beat Generation, the generation of nonconformists embodied by Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, and William Burroughs. This took place during a regional residency in the Aude (11), notably at the Théâtre de Narbonne and the Conservatoire de Narbonne.

The album **BEAT** was released in 2019 on the German label Neuklang and won the German Critics' Prize in 2020. The repertoire has been performed in venues such as Quartz / Atlantique Jazz Festival (Brest), Jazz à la Villette, Jazzèbre, l'Astrada (during Jazz in Marciac), and Jazz à Junas.

In 2019, supported by the Millau en Jazz festival and Aveyron Culture, the project **Danse des Insoumis** emerged with a new set of compositions, a project that was unfortunately halted with the arrival of the pandemic in France in 2020.



PROFESSIONAL ENVIRONMENT OF THE GRAND ENSEMBLE KOA:

The Grand Ensemble Koa is a group founded in 2008 and supported by the association Collectif Koa. The collective oversees each of the group's creations in a comprehensive manner, from the conception phase (composition, creation residencies, related cultural activities, project communication) to album production (three albums have been released since 2012: Koa-Roi – 2012, Ahimsa – 2015, and Beat – 2019), as well as tour production (scheduling and employment management).

- Collectif Koa owns a 9-seater van (Renault) made available to the group for all its activities.
- Since 2019, the Grand Ensemble Koa has been supported by the German label Neuklang, distributed in France by PIAS, notably for the release of the album BEAT.
- Since 2014, the Grand Ensemble Koa has been a member of the Grands Formats federation, where it is actively involved: Alfred Vilayleck was a board member from 2016 to 2019, and Christine Dumons, production director of Collectif Koa, has been on the board since 2023. Additionally, Christine Dumons serves as co-president of the Occijazz network.

PAST DATES

- January 6–10, 2025: Creation residency @ Théâtre La Vignette (Montpellier, 34)
- October 23, 2021: @ Le Taquin (Toulouse, 31)
- August 4, 2021: Beat concert @ l'Astrada – Jazz in Marciac (Marciac, 32)
- September 10, 2020: Beat concert @ Jazz à la Villette / Studio de l'Ermitage (Paris, 75)
- February 7, 2020: Beat album release @ Jam (Montpellier, 34)
- October 11, 2019: Beat concert @ Quartz / Atlantique Festival, rentrée Grands Formats (Brest, 29)
- July 19, 2019: Creation concert Danse des Insoumis @ Millau Jazz Festival (Millau, 12)
- February 2, 2019: Beat concert @ La Fraternelle (Saint-Claude, 39)
- January 18, 2019: Beat concert @ Jazzèbre (Perpignan, 66)
- October 29 – November 1, 2018: Creation residency Danse des Insoumis @ Théâtre de la Maison du Peuple / Millau en Jazz (Millau, 12)
- November 5–8, 2015: Creation residency Beat @ Scène Nationale de Narbonne (Narbonne, 11)
- December 13, 2016: Ahimsa concert @ Le Périscope (Lyon, 69)
- March 10, 2016: Ahimsa concert @ Le Carreau du Temple (Paris, 75)
- July 21, 2015: Ahimsa concert @ Festival Radio France (Montpellier, 34)
- July 21, 2014: Residency and concert Grand Ensemble Koa & Maak Spirit @ Festival Musiques au Présent (Narbonne, 11)
- October 13, 2012: Koa-Roi concert @ Festival Jazzèbre (Perpignan, 66)

LINE UP

● Alfred Vilayleck

Alfred Vilayleck is a bassist, improviser, composer, and educator. He is the leader of the groups Peemai (jazz-Asian fusion), Grand Ensemble Koa (contemporary jazz-rock ensemble), and Nefertiti (multidisciplinary concert for young audiences). Since 2008, he has also founded and served as the artistic director of the association Collectif Koa in Montpellier (supported by the DRAC) and the Koa Jazz Festival. He is co-leader of the Gratitude Trio (a Belgium-France trio with Jeroen Van Herzeele and Louis Favre) and the A Few Years Later Trio (with Serge Lazarevitch and Joël Allouche).

He has performed on French stages such as the Philharmonie, Jazz In Marciac, Atlantique Jazz Festival, Musée Guimet, Jazzdor, Jazz Sur Son 31, Junas, Jazzèbre, and internationally in China, New York, London, Laos, Indonesia, Morocco, Europe, South Africa, Mali, collaborating notably with artists from Indonesia (Gayam 16), Laos, and Mali. He is also a jazz professor at the Conservatoire de Montpellier.

● Caroline Sentis

From Connie & Blyde to Banan'N'Jug and the Grand Ensemble Koa, Caroline Sentis explores vocal techniques and instrumentation across unique musical landscapes. Concert after concert, she reveals the full extent of her vocal and instrumental mastery.

She plays with the textures of her voice, shaping and adapting it to fit the compositions – from jazz to chanson. Constantly learning, from her self-taught beginnings to formal studies at the Montpellier Conservatory, she creates bridges between her influences through duos, groups, and orchestral projects.

Her collaborations are imbued with kindness, humility, and contagious good humor, often featuring theatrical, dreamlike, and lyrical dimensions.

● Rémi Fox

Rémi Fox is a saxophonist, improviser, composer, and artistic director of numerous projects where experimentation and the pursuit of new forms are central.

He holds a Master's degree from the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Paris in jazz and improvised music, along with an award from the generative improvisation department and a Performer's Diploma.

He performs worldwide – solo and with various ensembles – and regularly brings his music into dialogue with other art forms. This desire has led to collaborations with theater, dance, cinema, and visual and digital arts.

● Armel Courrée

Armel Courrée earned a degree in musicology from Paul Valéry University in Montpellier in 2006. Alongside his studies, he performed in various street music groups such as the Vauvert Jazz Big Band and the gypsy-fusion group Tzigzag, with whom he recorded an eponymous album and toured between 2003 and 2006.

In 2009, he completed his Jazz DEM at the CRR of Perpignan. He currently performs with the metal brass band Born to Brass, the ethio-jazz group Ethioda, and several other street music ensembles. He teaches saxophone in Nîmes.



LINE UP

- Jérôme Dufour

Trained at the conservatories of Béziers and Marseille, Jérôme Dufour also holds a degree in musicology from the University of Montpellier and both a DEM and DE in jazz from the CRR of Perpignan, under the direction of Serge Lazarevitch. He currently teaches at the CRRs of Montpellier and Béziers.

He has performed in France and internationally with artists such as Fethi Tabet, Didier Levallet, Pierre Diaz, and Frédéric Monino. He is the co-founder of the ensemble Abrazz'band and currently performs with Jazzimut Quartet, Têtaclak, and various other musical projects alongside Serge Lazarevitch, Joël Allouche, and the collectives WART, Continuum, and Koa. He also engages in music education through pedagogical concerts focused on improvised music.

- Pascal Bouvier

Pascal Bouvier earned a DEM in trombone from the Conservatory of Nîmes and in jazz from the Conservatory of Perpignan, studying under Serge Lazarevitch.

He takes part in a wide variety of projects, ranging from symphony orchestras to big bands, brass bands, rock, Latin combos, and jazz groups. He has toured nationally and across Europe, recorded several albums, and performed at major international festivals. He continues his career as a trombonist, notably with the Collectif Koa, which he joined in 2009, the music-hall orchestra Octane, and the marching band Lorkès 974 – for both of which he is also an arranger – as well as with the group Ethioda.

- Daniel Moreau

A graduate of the conservatories of Tarn, Montpellier, and Perpignan, Daniel was involved in the founding of the Grand Ensemble Koa, through which he met Aka Moon, Magic Malik, Mâak Spirit, and Marc Ducret.

In 2012, he toured Europe with the Gospel Soul group and later traveled with Deedee Daniel to the United States, Morocco, and Senegal. He then spent time in Havana, Cuba, where he met pianists Ernan Lopez Nussa and Rolando Luna.

Daniel later founded the group Ethioda, with which he recorded two albums. Since 2017, he has also collaborated with Magic Malik Fanfare XP and the Gazy Jazz Project. In parallel with these artistic projects, Daniel Moreau teaches in the jazz and improvised music department at the CRR of Montpellier.

- Julien Grégoire

Julien Grégoire studied percussion at the Conservatory of Montpellier, then continued at the Conservatory of Perpignan, where he earned a DEM in drums and jazz.

He has performed with artists such as Julien Lourau, Bojan Z, Enildo Rasua, Salvador Niebla, Xavi Reija, Joël Allouche, Magic Malik, and Steve Coleman.

Julien is a regular performer with Joanda, La Varda, and the brass band Born to Brass. He also plays with Yoda Quartet, Melquiadès Quartet, the Grand Ensemble Koa, Darjiling Quintet, and the big band Red Star Orchestra.

He leads his own contemporary jazz quartet project, Watcher Hill, and co-leads the trio Zylia with pianist Rémi Ploton and vibraphonist Samuel Mastorakis.



DISCOGRAPHY

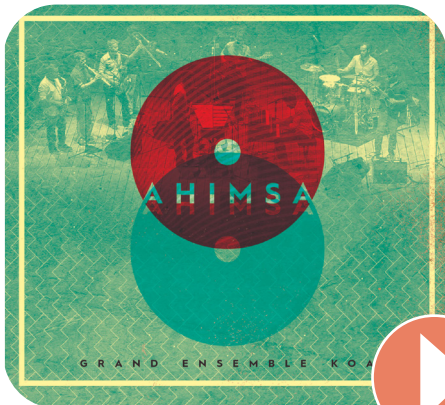


BEAT

Release in France: January 11, 2019
Release in Germany: January 25, 2019



RECORDING PHILIPPE GAILLOT
STUDIO RECALL
EDITING FLORIAN VINCENT
MIX & MASTERING PHILIPP HECK
STUDIO BAUER [LUDWIGSBURG]
PRODUCTION COLLECTIF KOA
COMPOSITION ALFRED VILAYLECK
MUSICIENS ALFRED VILAYLECK [DIRECTION, COMPOSITION & BASS]
CAROLINE SENTIS [VOICE]
MATTHIEU CHÉDEVILLE [SAXOPHONE SOPRANO]
ARMEL COURRÉE [SAXOPHONE ALTO]
JÉRÔME DUFOUR [SAXOPHONE TENOR]
PASCAL BOUVIER [TROMBONE]
DANIEL MOREAU [PIANO, KEYBOARDS]
SAMUEL MASTORAKIS [VIBRAPHONE]
JULIEN GRÉGOIRE [DRUMS]
SERGE LAZAREVITCH invité [GUITAR]



Ahimsa

Release: March 10, 2016



RECORDING PHILIPPE GAILLOT
STUDIO RECALL
MIX & MASTERING MICHEL ANDINA [BRUXELLES]
PRODUCTION COLLECTIF KOA
COMPOSITION ALFRED VILAYLECK
MUSICIENS ALFRED VILAYLECK [DIRECTION, COMPOSITION & BASS]
CAROLINE SENTIS [VOICE, SING]
MATTHIEU CHÉDEVILLE [SAXOPHONE SOPRANO]
ARMEL COURRÉE [SAXOPHONE ALTO]
JÉRÔME DUFOUR [SAXOPHONE TENOR]
PASCAL BOUVIER [TROMBONE]
MATIA LEVRERO [GUITAR]
DANIEL MOREAU [KEYBOARDS]
SAMUEL MASTORAKIS [VIBRAPHONE]
JULIEN GRÉGOIRE [DRUMS]



Koa Roi

Release: October 26, 2012



RECORDING STUDIO LA BUISSONNE
PRODUCTION COLLECTIF KOA
COMPOSITION ALFRED VILAYLECK
MUSICIENS ALFRED VILAYLECK [DIRECTION, COMPOSITION & BASS]
SYLVAIN ARTIGNAN [CLARINET]
MATTHIEU CHÉDEVILLE [SAXOPHONES]
ARMEL COURRÉE [SAXOPHONE ALTO]
JÉRÔME DUFOUR [SAXOPHONE TENOR]
PASCAL BOUVIER [TROMBONE]
YOAN FERNANDEZ & MATIA LEVRERO [GUITAR]
GUYLAIN DOMAS [BASS]
DANIEL MOREAU [ELECTRIC PIANO]
SAMUEL MASTORAKIS [VIBRAPHONE]
JULIEN GRÉGOIRE [DRUMS]

ACTIONS CULTURELLES

The presentation of a Grand Ensemble Koa concert and hosting during residency periods can be accompanied by cultural mediation work connected to the territory where the venue is located. All the musicians in the group are experienced educators through ongoing work in conservatories or music schools in the Occitanie region.

The proposed cultural activities are as follows:

JAZZ MEETS KIDS

Educational concerts aimed at young audiences [ranging from primary school to high school], including a presentation of the group's repertoire, as well as meetings and discussions with the audience.

PUBLIC REHEARSALS

Open rehearsal or soundcheck sessions [with opportunities for exchanges with the public about the group's preparation process before the concert].

MASTERCLASS

Work on the group's repertoire [target audiences: music schools, conservatory and university students], with the possibility of a public presentation including both the group's musicians and the masterclass participants [in consultation with Alfred Vilayleck].

SOUNDPAINTING WORKSHOP

Introduction to the sign-based conducting language created by Walter Thompson, which allows multiple artistic disciplines to be combined on stage, including musicians, actors, and dancers of all ages and levels. These workshops can lead to a public presentation [in consultation with Alfred Vilayleck].

If you are interested in any of these activities, please do not hesitate to contact us for more information:

Alfred Vilayleck / Artistic director
vsomasy@gmail.com - 06 88 15 14 86

Collectif Koa
contact@collectifkoa.com

CULTUREJAZZ - SEPTEMBER 2020

«Asphodèle», the first piece, revolves around the velvety voice of the trombone, the electric bass lays down its rock beat, the vibraphone pushes the walls of sound and opens up the studio space and our minds, the spirit of Pink Floyd makes a guest appearance when the vocalist is doubled by the choir of all the others. Impressive.»

Alain Gauthier

JAZZ MAGAZINE - OCTOBER 2019

«Caroline Sentis unleashed her voice in modulations akin to trapeze leaps, perfectly evoking the hissing of sulfurous tongues rising from the furnace-like bodies of the Beat poets [...].»

Guy Darol

LES DERNIÈRES NOUVELLES DU JAZZ - JANUARY 2019

«A dazzling confirmation of Alfred Vilayleck's talent as a composer and of the musical and instrumental quality of the Grand Ensemble Koa from Montpellier. (...) The strength of the soloists radiates throughout the improvised sections, and a true collective spirit is present across the entire CD, track after track.»

Xavier Prévost

SOCIAL MEDIAS

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 [Inkfi.re/grand-ensemble-koa](https://inkfi.re/grand-ensemble-koa)



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