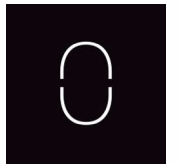




t o w e r o f m e a n i n g  
a r t h u r r u s s e l l



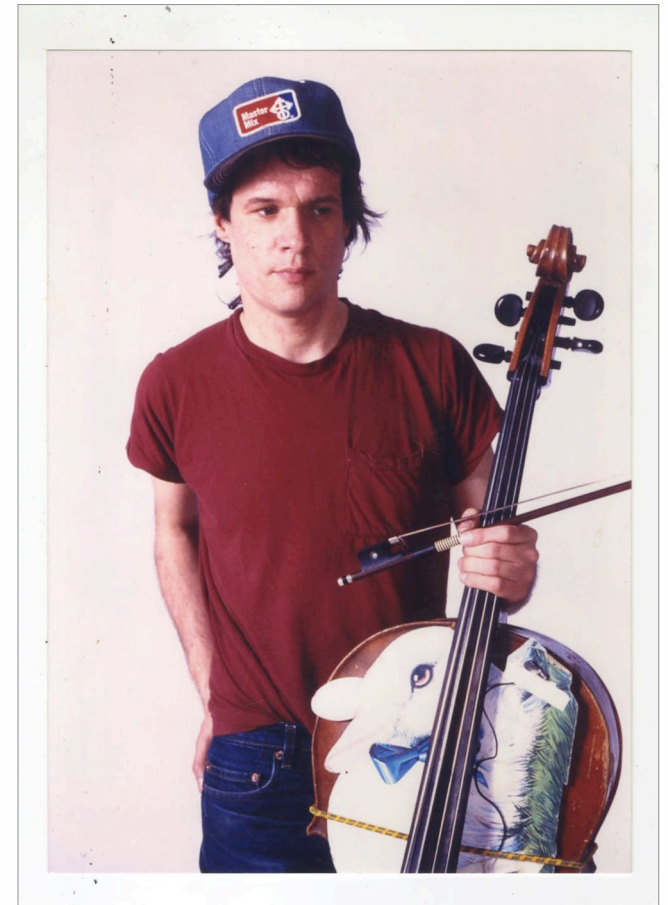
A U M e n s e m b l e n s e m b l e  
g r a n d e n s e m b l e



Arthur Russel  
1951 - 1992

He liked irregular time signatures, hidden secrets in interstices, accidents... He wanted less the immediate efficiency than fleeting musical delights nested in the most instable music forms, damaged mosaics, truncated repeats. Thus, we can't help but read, retrospectively and with the exegesis of his later-issued works, an adequacy between his wavering success and his music, rarely restive in the substance or the execution but perpetually unstable in its forms and its poetic.

Olivier Lamm  
Libération, 2015







« There, all is order and beauty, luxury, peace and pleasure » (IMPROJAZZ)  
A U M g r a n d e n s e m b l e



« Music that's immediately attractive and persistently elusive » (THE WIRE)  
e n s e m b l e 0

In 1980, after considering hiring Philip Glass finally too busy working on his own opera *Satyagraha*, Robert Wilson asks Arthur Russell to write the music for his new opera *Medea*. Glass himself advised Wilson to choose Russell. Arthur Russell is really happy, but also nervous about this proposal. Collaborating with Robert Wilson on *Einstein on the Beach* had changed Philip Glass' life. Russell can expect a similar effect. But as the writing and the recording are quite advanced, the relation between Wilson and Russell deteriorates. The director blames the composer for not listening to his suggestions and for working too slowly.

Julius Eastman conducts the 70 minute recording of this music almost entirely made out of sustained clusters, tempoless. Something medieval, nearly unchanging, evoking games of power, paranoia, violence and decline - all notions in the score of *Euripide* play. An outstanding composition in Arthur Russell's repertoire, in which secrets hide within the gaps, with no narrative, no highlight, no pulse inherited from pop music, contrary to the rest of his work. Like a damaged patchwork, this piece suggests that Russell would have excelled in the field of minimalist new music.

According to Wilson, what will later become **Tower of Meaning** doesn't work. But probably, more than a musical question, tensions and misunderstandings come from the unmatching personalities. Robert Wilson finally calls Gavin Bryars to create the final soundtrack, claiming that he can't get what he needs from Russell.

In the end, Philip Glass decides to publish the Tower of Meaning tracks in 1983 on his own imprint Chatham Square

Full of regrets, Arthur Russell writes a letter to Robert Wilson, saying approximately this : *Last night I dreamed that we were breaking the ice and becoming friends. Everybody's angry. I know you'll probably tear this letter. I really didn't want to undermine your show, I was just struggling against this helplessness to work faster. I always believed that in the end you'd be happy with the music, but today I feel sorry, and you angry.*

But this letter was never sent...

Arthur Russell's unwavering eclecticism shows us that he should be seen on the same level as Captain Beefheart, John Cage, Charles Ives, Harry Partch, Steve Reich, La Monte Young, Frank Zappa and others who have contributed to the strong North-American tradition of the maverick composer.

Maybe because he was too open-minded, Russell lacked of this singularity and this ambition owned by other mavericks of his time. And he paid the price of his discrete personality. *What Philip Glass and Steve Reich did in particular, and La Monte Young too in its own way, it's making sense with the concept of a brand in music* comments Peter Gordon. *Glass or Reich's sounds were and will always remain identifiable. Their own progress was made inside an ensemble of parameters that they imposed to themselves quite early.* John Gibson adds that Glass and Reich had developed "a sort of stiffness in what they were doing" to establish their reputation. *Terry Riley was doing the same, and La Monte Young, the ultimate possessive, took over the field of drone and tuning", he says. "All of them were protecting their land. Rather, Russell shown so few interest in doing the same thing twice that his rigorous eclecticism remained until the end of his life.*

(...) Donald Murk : *Everything he touched was absorbed in his global vision. He could have been more successful if he had focused this vision on precise things".*

*Everytime he could, Russell used to work without hierarchy, interconnected, horizontally, exploring orchestral composition, pop/folk/rock music, disco/ dance - always working these fields simultaneously. He favored cultures of involvement rather than those of exclusion, and preferred non-dominant ones (feminine, black, gay). Russell and his peers' focus on producing good music by establishing relationships based on collaboration and non-exploitation appears like a guide for an ethic and creative life.*(extract of the Tim Lawrence ' book)







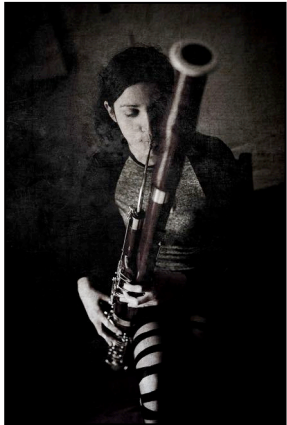


tower of meaning is commissioned by le Lieu Unique, Nationale Scene of Nantes (France), for the second edition of Festival Variations (april 2018).



### DISTRIBUTION

Sophie Bernado (bassoon)  
Cyprien Busolini (viola)  
Melaine Dalibert (piano)  
Jozef Dumoulin (synthesizer)  
Céline Flamen (cello)  
Stéphane Garin (percussion, artistic co-direction)  
Ellen Giaccone (voice)  
Jean-Brice Godet (bass clarinet)  
Amélie Grould (vibraphon)  
Alexandre Herer (electronics)  
Julien Pontvianne (saxophones, orchestration, artistic direction)  
Christian Pruvost (trumpet)  
Benjamin Maumus (sound technician)



### Sophie Bernado (bassoon)

After musical studies in Toulouse, Paris and at the Konservatorium Richard Strauss in Munich, and after years spent collaborating with the Berlin underground scene by singing/rapping as well as improvising on bassoon, Sophie Bernado can be associated to several projects - among others, the Surnatural Orchestra, l'Arbre Rouge, Dominique A, Ikui Doki, Emily Loizeau, l'ensemble Art Sonic, Eve Risser's White Desert Orchestra, Manuel Delgado, Dragon, Belleville, L.A from Paris...



### Cyprien Busolini (viola)

After classical studies, Cyprien Busolini focuses on contemporary music and free improvisation. His music, often minimal, explores the edge between sound and silence. He works mainly from multiple sounds, combining noise and pitch. He is part of Dedalus and Onceim ensembles, and plays, furthermore, with the Fratres ensemble, playing early music on early instruments.

### Melaine Dalibert (piano)

Specially appreciated, from Europe to the USA, for his eclectic programs, pianist Melaine Dalibert was soon involved in new contemporary musics, premiering works by Gérard Pesson, Stefano Gervasoni, Giuliano D'Angiolini or Tom Johnson. He is also a composer oriented toward minimal and algorithmic musics, recorded for the English label Another Timbre, receiving enthusiastic reviews from critics. He teaches at the Rennes conservatory in France, and his co-director the Autres Mesures festival.



### Jozef Dumoulin (synthesizer)

Belgian pianist based in Paris, Jozef Dumoulin is a main figure of the creative musics from today, proposing notably a very personnel approach of the Fender Rhodes. Through Europe, USA, China or Japan, he shares his open and enlightened idea of keyboards with, among others, The Red Hill Orchestra (Ellery Eskelin, Dan Weiss), Orca Noise Unit, Plug & Pray (with Benoît Delbecq), Octurn...







### C é l i n e   F l a m e n   ( c e l l o )

She worked with Michel Strauss, Christian Ivaldi, but also Janos Starker, Gary Hoffman and Christof Henkel, and she has been solo cellist of the Orchestra of Poitou Charentes and of the Padeloup Orchestra, playing also in the Orchestre National d'Ile de France, Orchestre Philharmonique of Radio France, Paris Chamber Orchestra, Orchestra of d'Auvergne, l'Orchestre National de France and Nederlands kamer orkest of Amsterdam. She plays also with Emilie Simon, Cheick Tidiane, Toumani Diabaté, Akim el Sikameya, Sigur Ross ou Alix Ewan. She is now a member of the Orquesta Bandart.



### S t é p h a n e   G a r i n   ( v i b r a p h o n )

Stéphane Garin played or collaborated with musicians, dancers or performers like Carl Craig, Pascal Comelade, Jurg Frey, Ryoji Ikeda, Phil Niblock, Tristan Perich or Christian Wolff. He is a founding member of the ensemble 0, and plays with the ensemble Dedalus, the audiolab/Soinumapa collective.



### E l l e n   G i a c o n e   ( v o i c e )

At once Italian, Dutch and French, Ellen Giaccone sings within several ensembles, including the Monteverdi Choir, les Arts Florissants, Europa Barocca, La Fenice, Ensemble Apollo, la Tempête, Pygmalion or Accentus under the direction of Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Stephen Layton, Laurence Pottiers, Laurence Equilbey, William Christie. She sings as chorist, as a soloist or in operas, as comfortable in Handel's Messiah as in the Fauré's Requiem, Berio's Chamber Music or the piece by Kaija Saariaho Quatre Instants.





### Amélie Grould (vibraphon)

Heard notably within the great Ryoji Ikeda's Superposition, with which she played in several venues in Europe, USA, Japan, Australia, Colombia, or Argentina, Amélie Grould plays mainly contemporary music (ensembles Court Circuit, 2e2m, Arcema...), musical theatre (TrioTroïka), new musics (AUM grand ensemble) and performances (Nekko with Safia Azoug and drawer Yuko Higaki).



### Alexandre Herer (electronics)

Born in 1981, he studied the piano near Paris. He leads the quintet Oxyd – a third album just released - and his trio, who released the album Holophonic in 2013 on his own label, Onze Heures Onze, which is also the collective of musicians that Alexandre co-created in 2010 in Paris. He is inspired by great jazzmen, by 90's rock music, experimental pop/rock from today, and by classical and contemporary musics. He won several prizes with his own bands, and played in all Europe, in New York, in China...



### Christian Pruvost (trumpet)

Christian Pruvost explores every possibilities of the trumpet, from the most soft breath to the most bright sparkle. Sometime acoustic, sometime lightly amplified, he developed a personality complemented by some sound objects which expands his timbre. He is a member of Muzzix collective and Dedalus ensemble, and worked on performance and orchestration of works by composers like Moondog, Jean- Luc Guionnet, Sébastien Roux, John White or Tom Johnson.







### Benjamin Maumus (sound technician)

Sound engineer and musician, Benjamin Maumus uses microphones loudspeaker as instruments for sound creation. He has been elaborating for many years a specific ways for recording, composition, control, diffusion and setting the sound in space. A lot of research, creations and collaborations occurred in relation to the space, the place, the context or the soundscape, at the confluence of acousmatic, phonography, free improvisation, radio documentary and sound arts. Since 2005, he works permanently as a sound engineer, musical assistant and stage manager at the GMEA, Centre National de Création Musicale d'Albi-Tarn (France).

## C O N T A C T S

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