

Bio information: **GHOST RHYTHMS**

Title: **LIVE AT YOSHIWARA** (Cuneiform Rune 466) | Format: CD / DIGITAL

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FILE UNDER: **JAZZ / JAZZ-ROCK / PROGRESSIVE ROCK**

**One of the World's Great, Large, Boundary-Blurring Ensembles**  
**GHOST RHYTHMS**  
**Takes the Listener on a Journey through Parallel Realities with**  
**LIVE AT YOSHIWARA**  
**A Fictional Concert Supposedly Compiled from Performances in**  
**Various Unlikely, Non-existent or Long-gone Locations throughout Time**

Having so far released three studio efforts, French ensemble **Ghost Rhythms** present their first live album, and debut Cuneiform release, *Live at Yoshiwara*, recorded in front of a small audience just before Christmas 2018 at Les Frigos in Paris – in the very room that serves as the setting for their weekly rehearsals.

A large ensemble of varying size, **Ghost Rhythms** is led by composers, drummer **Xavier Gélard** and pianist **Camille Petit**. Together, they have composed the entirety of the band's material except for this one-off project originally designed to coincide with **GR**'s tenth anniversary. For *Live at Yoshiwara*, they invited the other members to contribute pieces of their own for the first – and possibly only – time. Gélard himself contributes three pieces, but there are none by Petit – the only Gélard/Petit compositions in the set being remakes of tracks from their first two albums.

Both born in 1979, Gélard and Petit have a long history dating back to first meeting in high school, although they didn't become musical collaborators until some years later when Petit joined a band Gélard had formed with his guitarist brother. Before long, the pair had left to form their own prog-rock outfit, Chamane, which was fronted by a guitarist, vocalist and lyricist who wrote their repertoire along with Gélard and Petit. Up to that point, the two had followed very different musical paths : Gélard is self-taught (after starting out on guitar, an instrument he still occasionally plays in Ghost Rhythms), influenced chiefly by prog-rock drummers Bill Bruford and Phil Collins, whereas Petit is a classically-trained pianist who ventured off the academic path through his interest in film music, with a particular fondness for Jerry Goldsmith's scores, which introduced him to odd time signatures, and in modern piano-led jazz trios such as EST and The Bad Plus. Gélard and Petit found a shared interest in polyrhythms, and beyond 1970s progressive rock, found them in jazz, from Dave Brubeck's pioneering 1960s albums to the modern efforts of Steve Coleman, Magic Malik and the obscure Israeli fusion band Esta.

By 2005, Chamane was reaching its natural end. In its final year, the band had turned to collective improvisation as a distraction from mounting disagreements on musical direction, which coincided with Gélard taking a sabbatical from drumming due to tinnitus. Before long, he and Petit were reunited, working in tandem on a very different project, based on loops and what they conceptualised as “ghost rhythms”, for instance bass lines that can be perceived differently depending on the patterns played by the other instruments around it – something Gélard had first become fascinated hearing Bill Bruford's playful polyrhythmic drumming in Yes's “Heart of the Sunrise”, from 1972's *Fragile*. Nearly all of the basic material for the first two Ghost Rhythms albums, 2007's *Ghost Rhythms* and 2008's *Sept Cercles*, was generated during a series of piano/drums improvisation/writing sessions.

Their new partnership was rooted in a jazz rather than rock aesthetic, but since neither had a background in that genre or knew any jazz musicians, Gélard and Petit looked for potential guest soloists, initially intending to collaborate remotely, via the Internet. Over the ensuing months, they assembled what became a virtual but stable collective. The arrival of bassist **Grégory Kosovski**, who shared their prog background (with Frank Zappa his main influence), marked a turning point, and before long **Ghost Rhythms** became a real band, assembling for weekly rehearsals – although Gélard and Petit made clear from the outset that they alone would compose all the music, their view being that an interesting balance between immediacy and a more cerebral approach would be achieved between their own background as self-taught, prog-rock-influenced composers/musicians and by the academically-trained classical/jazz musicians who made up the rest of the ensemble.

Of the musicians on the first two albums, guitarist **Guillaume Aventurin** remains a member to this day, as does flautist **Julien Bigorgne** (although he doesn't appear on *Yoshiwara*, having suffered a last-minute mishap which forced his replacement with second guitarist **Tom Namias**), and tenor saxophonist **David Rousselet** plays with Ghost Rhythms for the last time on the album after being with the band since its inception. Rounding out the current line-up are cellist **Nadia Mejri-Chapelle**, percussionist **Morgan Lowenstein**, accordion player **Alexis Collin** and alto saxophonist **Maxime Thiébaud**, all of whom have been involved since their third release.

By 2008, **Ghost Rhythms** were regularly gigging in various small Paris venues, but had yet to come to the attention of established media and institutions. This began to change when the band won prizes in several talent contests : at the **Boule Bleue festival** in the Somme in September 2008 (they were invited back for a headlining slot at the 2009 edition), the **Jazz à La Défense** festival in Paris in June 2012, where **GR** came 3rd and 2nd in the Best Ensemble and Best Composer categories, and the **Jazz en Baie** festival near the Mont-Saint-Michel in September 2013. The La Défense prizes in particular proved instrumental in getting booked in Paris' leading jazz clubs, such as the Sunset, where they won yet another talent contest.

As expressed through the album and track titles and liner notes, the concept of *ghost rhythms* also encompasses some of Gélard and Petit's non-musical interests such as the parallel realities in Philip K. Dick's novels and Pierre Bayard's *Sherlock Holmes Was Wrong* books, in which the author proves the detective – and, in fact, Arthur Conan Doyle – had got things completely wrong. **GR**'s third album, 2015's double-CD *Madeleine*, was a culmination of this - seven years in the works, including nearly two years of assiduous studio work involving many extra musicians alongside the band's core members. Alfred Hitchcock's masterpiece *Vertigo* had long fascinated Gélard and Petit, and their interest focused on the Madeleine character (played by Kim Novak), a fiction that is more 'real' than the woman hired to play her, a copy with no original. In musical terms, this translated into the concept of variations on themes that are never stated as such – “ghost themes”.

After completing *Madeleine*, it was also decided to celebrate **Ghost Rhythms**' tenth anniversary with a special project : *Live at Yoshiwara*. The intention was to draw attention to **GR** as a live band, a dimension overshadowed by the very studio-oriented *Madeleine*. For the first time on *Yoshiwara*, all members were invited to contribute compositions. No restrictive specifications were imposed on the band members' contributions, which in some cases – Collin's “Maohee” and Kosovski's “Charivari” - required little extra work to give them the **GR** 'stamp', unlike Rousselet's “Circumambulation”, which was originally presented as a straight jazz piece, and Aventurin's “Xanadu”, which departs most from the band's usual style.

Although the initial plan was to also revive hitherto unrecorded older pieces, so much new music was put forward that this was abandoned in favor of all-new music with just two revised arrangements; “Chambre Claire” (from *Ghost Rhythms*) and “La Chose” (from *Sept Cercles*). The result is a fictional concert supposedly compiled from performances in various unlikely, non-existent or long-gone venues or locations, most notably Yoshiwara, the club in Fritz Lang's 1927 film *Metropolis*. The repertoire was debuted at Paris' Sunset club in November 2016, and has since formed the bulk of **GR**'s performances, save for occasional *Madeleine* presentations.

None of the core members of **Ghost Rhythms** are full-time professional musicians – indeed, for most, this is their only regular band – but they are all fully committed and, apart from a yearly summer break, they assemble every Friday night for rehearsals that serve as workshops to try out new material and build up arrangements with input from all members. **GR** have yet to perform outside France and, with only a few exceptions, due to the logistics of transporting, have rarely ventured far beyond the greater Paris area.

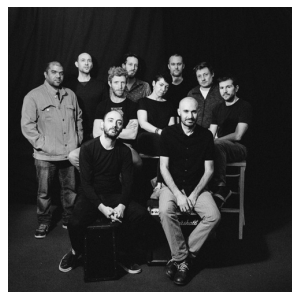
There is a nebula of projects around Ghost Rhythms – not least Gélard and Petit's respective solo ventures, **Habitat Farine** and **Lady With** – for which the collective **LEM** (Laboratoire d'Expérimentation Musicale) acts as an umbrella structure, a record label, and a promoter of its own festival, whose first edition, a 10-hour marathon dubbed LEM First Landing, took place in July 2018 at Les Frigos, including two distinct **GR** performances, one of *Madeleine* and another of *Live at Yoshiwara*.

The release of *Live at Yoshiwara* will be celebrated with live performances in Paris during the latter part of 2019 : on October 18th at the Sunset (as part of the Jazz Sur Seine festival) and on November 7th at La Scène du Canal on a double-bill with Petit's side project Lady With.

**For more information on Ghost Rhythms:**  
[www.facebook.com/GhostRhythms](http://www.facebook.com/GhostRhythms) - [www.cuneiformrecords.com](http://www.cuneiformrecords.com)

### PROMOTIONAL PHOTOS

Digital [High-Resolution] images available at <http://www.cuneiformrecords.com/bandshtml/ghostrhythms.html>



## **XAVIER GÉLARD FROM GHOST RHYTHMS EXPLAINS THE STORY BEHIND 'LIVE AT YOSHIWARA':**

*“Live at Yoshiwara is exactly what the title says : a live album, in a place called Yoshiwara.*

*Except there are no venues called Yoshiwara. There is one infamous Yoshiwara district in Japan, which in turn lent its name to the depraved, ambiguous red-light district and club in Metropolis, the Fritz Lang's 1927 silent sci-fi movie.*

*For a long time, Camille Petit and myself were very interested in the slight frontier between existent and non-existent features in human life; dreams, for one; memories; and ghosts. That was that main interest that brought to life our double album Madeleine, which creates another soundtrack for Hitchcock's Vertigo, and gives space for the ghost that the movie gives life to, Madeleine. Madeleine really influences the characters in the movie, though she is not a real ghost, but merely an invention from a con-man.*

*This record, Live at Yoshiwara, is no exception. We chose to make it live, but place it in a non-existing venue; we created a space that exists only in name within a real space, and recorded the music there, in front of a small audience. Although the music really is live in front of that audience, the music we made, the way we interpreted it, and the way we edited it, was influenced by the strong atmosphere surrounding Metropolis' Yoshiwara, mixing imaginary locations and historic and future timelines at once.*

*I remember being amazed by Pink Floyd's live at Pompei, since they played live for no audience; and being intrigued by Frank Zappa's concept of ‘Xenochrony’, which consists of mixing several pieces from different times into one song. You can say that this album pays homage to those two attempts at playing with the "live album" concept.”*

## **WHAT THE PRESS HAS SAID ABOUT: GHOST RHYTHMS**

A “massively fun and ornately detailed”, “seriously compelling” album, with “influences of folk music, modern jazz and a slight nod to pop music and ambient minimalism”, with “stunning moments of beauty”

– Dave Sumner, *Bird Is The Worm*

“Mysterious and beguiling”, “gloriously expansive and darkly cinematic”, “a captivating and highly musical tribute to a cinematic classic”, “a highly enjoyable and melodic album of intricate chamber jazz arrangements for [a] small [to] medium-sized ensemble”

– Roger Trenwith, *The Progressive Aspect*

“The musical equivalent of a page-turner... Styles mingle without ever it sounding artificial... This double concept album cannot be reduced to any existing style – it is in equal parts jazz, chamber music, rock, improv and hypnotic loops... A coherent, finely-crafted and supremely evocative work.”

– Jean-Philippe Haas / *Chromatique*