



Bio information: **THE CLAUDIA QUINTET**

Title: ***SUPER PETITE*** (Cuneiform Rune 427) Format: CD / DIGITAL

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FILE UNDER: JAZZ / POST-JAZZ

**Acclaimed Drummer-Composer John Hollenbeck Pens Rich, Complex Tunes  
for an Era of Short Attention Spans on The Claudia Quintet's 8th album  
– *Super Petite* –**

**a Potent Package that Condenses Virtuoso Playing and a Wealth of Ideas into Ten Compact Songs**

*Short* doesn't necessarily mean *simple*. Drummer-composer **John Hollenbeck** acrobatically explores the dichotomy between brevity and complexity on *Super Petite*, the eighth release by the critically acclaimed, proudly eccentric **Claudia Quintet**. The oxymoronic title of the band's newest album on **Cuneiform Records** captures the essence of its ten new compositions, which pack all of the wit and virtuosity that listeners have come to expect from the Claudia Quintet into the time frame of radio-friendly pop songs.

As always, Hollenbeck's uncategorizable music – which bridges the worlds of modern jazz and new music in surprising and inventive ways – is realized by Claudia's longstanding line-up: clarinetist/tenor saxophonist **Chris Speed**, vibraphonist **Matt Moran**, bassist **Drew Gress**, and accordionist **Red Wierenga**. Over the course of 19 years and 8 albums, the band has forged an astounding chemistry and become expert at juggling mind-boggling dexterity with inviting emotion and spirit.

Like the band's name, the title *Super Petite* originated as an affectionate nickname for one of the band's fans. "I thought that was a funny juxtaposition," Hollenbeck recalls, "but it also became a good frame for the album because the tunes are short but can also be grand in a way – just not in length."

The concept was both a personal challenge for Hollenbeck as a composer always dealing with a wealth of ideas, but also a reaction to a tendency in modern music toward the epic. "I'm feeling things in the opposite direction," the composer explains. "When tunes are longer, there tend to be moments when not a whole lot is happening. If you have a really short tune, the whole thing has to be compelling."

Nowhere is that principle better exemplified than in "**Pure Poem**," which clocks in at under two minutes but is the most difficult piece the quintet has ever recorded. It was inspired by "**Pure Poem 1007-1103**" by Japanese poet **Shigeru Matsui**, which consists solely of sequences of Roman numerals and was used by controversial poet **Kenneth Goldsmith** to illustrate his theory of "**Uncreative Writing**."

Hollenbeck draws inspiration from a number of diverse sources throughout *Super Petite*, including two unrecognizable interpretations of classic jazz – which, in its earliest years, demanded short songs due to the limitations of the day's recording media. The mesmerizing "**Nightbreak**," which opens the album, is built upon a slowed-down translation of **Charlie Parker**'s famous break in "**Night of Tunisia**," while "**Philly**" transforms an infamous **Philly Joe Jones** lick into an exercise in bebop deconstruction.

Two variations on the same theme, "**JFK Beagle**" and "**Newark Beagle**," were sparked by the contraband-sniffing dogs that patrol the international baggage claim area of airports. They are the living embodiment of *Super Petite* – utterly adorable but all business. "My problem is I want to pet the beagles but they're so focused on that one thing," Hollenbeck laments. "That piece began as a portrait, a combination of being really cute but staying focused. I don't know exactly what that would sound like musically, but that's the challenge. In the end it doesn't really matter to me if it happens or not, because it still leads me into a certain world." In this case, the idea of international travel inspired Hollenbeck to use his passport number as a series of pitches that formed the basis for the pieces.

Similarly, "**If You Seek a Fox**" began life as a dig at the composer's least favorite 24-hour cable news network, then morphed into an aural description of the eponymous animal. "**A-List**" began with an even more fantastical scenario, imagining the Claudia Quintet walking the red carpet. ("Think *Entourage* meets the Geek Squad," as Hollenbeck wryly puts it in his liner notes.) If the tune's urgent

[press release continued on verso]

pulse is unlikely to attract the paparazzi, it's nonetheless a compelling mood piece that Hollenbeck insists "feels almost like a **Led Zeppelin** tune in our heads."

"**Peterborough**" was written in the titular New Hampshire town, where Hollenbeck spent six idyllic weeks in the fall of 2014 as a resident artist at the famed **MacDowell Colony**. It was there that **Aaron Copland** composed his Pulitzer-winning "**Appalachian Spring**," which inspired the hint of Coplandesque American optimism in Hollenbeck's combination of clarinet and vibes. The residency also provided the opportunity to explore the work of master Senegalese drummer/composer **Doudou N'Diaye Rose**, whose "**Rose Rhythm**" forms the basis for Hollenbeck's "**Rose-Colored Rhythm**."

Hollenbeck describes the MacDowell Colony as "a beautiful space where you can do whatever you want all day and no one bothers you. You can work hard all day on something, but you can also get out and ride a bike or run if you want. Then in the evening you see all these other people from different disciplines who have been doing the same thing as you, talk about what they're doing, go to bed and do it all again the next day."

The album concludes with "**Mangolds**," a mood piece built from a slow, elongated melody line named for Hollenbeck's favorite vegetarian restaurant in Graz, Austria, where he worked with the renowned **Jazz Bigband Graz** on his 2006 release ***Joys and Desires***.

*For more information on The Claudia Quintet:*

[www.claudiaquintet.com](http://www.claudiaquintet.com) – [www.johnhollenbeck.com/band/the-claudia-quintet](http://www.johnhollenbeck.com/band/the-claudia-quintet) – [www.facebook.com/ClaudiaQuintet/](https://www.facebook.com/ClaudiaQuintet/)  
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### **BAND MEMBER BIOS: THE CLAUDIA QUINTET**

**JOHN HOLLENBECK** [see also: <http://johnhollenbeck.com>]

A graduate of the Eastman School of Music, Hollenbeck recently concluded an 11-year professorship at the **Jazz Institute Berlin** to join the faculty of **McGill University's Schulich School of Music**. In addition to the Claudia Quintet, Hollenbeck also leads his twice **Grammy**-nominated **Large Ensemble** and was nominated again for his arrangement of **Jimmy Webb's** "The Moon's a Harsh Mistress" from ***Songs I Like a Lot***, the first of two albums that puckishly reimagine pop songs by the likes of **Cyndi Lauper**, **Daft Punk**, **Queen** and **Burt Bacharach** with big band arrangements. His other awards and honors include the 2012 **Doris Duke Performing Artist Award**, the 2010 **ASCAP Jazz Vanguard Award** and a 2007 **Guggenheim Fellowship**; winning the **Jazz Composers Alliance Composition Contest** in 1995 and 2002; **Meet the Composer's Grants** in 1995 and 2001; and **Rising Star Arranger** winS in the 2012 and 2013 **DownBeat Critics' Polls** as well as in 2011 for the JHLE as Rising Star Big Band.

**DREW GRESS** [see also: [www.drewgress.com](http://www.drewgress.com)]

Bassist/composer **Drew Gress** performs extensively with artists on the cutting edge of contemporary improvised music. His latest project, **The Sky Inside**, features Drew's original compositions for quintet, was released in 2013 on **Pirouet**. Earlier releases include the critically-acclaimed ***The Irrational Numbers*** (2008) ***7 Black Butterflies*** (2005), ***Spin & Drift*** (2001), and ***Heyday*** (1997). Future projects include a solo bass recording, and an electronics project...soon to be unveiled.

Gress can also be heard within the ensembles of **John Abercrombie**, **Ralph Alessi**, **Bill Carrothers**, **Marc Copland**, **Sylvie Courvoisier**, **Mark Feldman**, **John Hollenbeck**, **Steve Lehman**, **Tony Malaby**, and **Chris Potter**. To date he has appeared on over 375 recordings. (In an altogether previous musical life, he grounded the performances of **Buddy Hackett**, **Phyllis Diller**, **Zoot Sims**, **Cab Calloway**, and **Pia Zadora**).

Gress has toured North and South America, Europe, Asia, Africa, and Australia and has served as Artist-in-Residence in **Santiago, Chile**, the **St. Petersburg Conservatory**, Russia, and at the **Paris Conservatoire**. He also holds ongoing teaching positions at NYU and at the **Siena Jazz Workshop**. He has received grants from the **National Endowment for the Arts**, **Meet the Composer**, and **Chamber Music America**. Gress currently resides in New York. He is an endorsing artist for **Thomastik Strings**.

**MATT MORAN**

[see also: [www.mattmoran.com](http://www.mattmoran.com)]

**Matt Moran** has earned a reputation as one of the most innovative vibraphonists working today. Named "**Rising Star**" on vibraphone by the 2014 **Downbeat Critics Poll**, he has been called "a certifiably brilliant musician" and "the most astonishingly progressive vibraphone player since the '70s" by Steve Smith (Music Editor, *TimeOut NY*). As *TimeOut NY* noted, his work has "such unusual breadth and wonderful inconsistency that calling it simply 'jazz' paints it into an inaccurate corner." Moran leads the brass band **Slavic Soul Party!** combining global musical languages; has interpreted songs of **Charles Ives** on two recordings with his ensemble Sideshow; and recorded new music with artists such as **Mivos String Quartet**, **John Hollenbeck**, and **Bojan Vuletic**. Moran's music-making is genre-bending, creative, and intense; he has released eight albums of his own and appeared on albums by artists such as **The Claudia Quintet**, **Sufjan Stevens**, **Billy Martin**, **Theo Bleckmann**, **William Parker**, **Mat Maneri**, **Curtis Hasselbring**, **Nate Wooley**, **Luciana Souza**, **Frank London**, **Saban Bajramovic**, **Merita Halili**, **Sufjan**, **Combustible Edison**, **Lionel Hampton**, and **Ellery Eskelin**.

**CHRIS SPEED** [see also: [www.chrisspeed.com](http://www.chrisspeed.com)]

**Chris Speed** is a Brooklyn based composer, clarinetist and saxophonist and is "one of the principal figures in a dynamic left-of-center jazz/improv scene in the city" (*NYTimes*). His own bands include his new trio with **Dave King** and **Chris Tordini**, **Endangered Blood**, **Human Feel**, **yeah NO**, **Trio Iffy**, **Pachora** and **The Clarinets**. He is a founding member of **Jim Black's Alas No Axis** and **John Hollenbeck's Claudia Quintet** (two of the most influential working bands today), works with **Uri Caine** (deconstructing works by **Mahler**, **Mozart**, **Bach**, **Schoenberg**, **Gershwin**) and maintains a busy career touring, recording, performing, composing, practicing and teaching. Current projects include work with **Craig Taborn's Heroic Frenzies**, **Michael Formanek's Ensemble Kolossus (ECM)**, **Dave King's Trucking Co. (Sunnyside)**, **Banda de los Muertos (NYC's only Banda band, Barbés Records)**, **Matt Mitchell's Quartet (Pi Recordings)**, **Mary Halvorson's Reverse Blue (Relative Pitch)** as well as touring his trio and **Endangered Blood** (with **Black**, **Trevor Dunn** and **Oscar Noriega**), featured on NPR's Tiny Desk Concerts in 2012.

**RED WIERENGA** [see also: <http://redwierenga.com>]

**Red Wierenga** is a pianist, accordionist, respectronicist, improviser, and composer based in New York City. His longest creative association is with

the **Respect Sextet**, called “a group which has released one of the most compelling recordings of the year” by the *Wall Street Journal*, and “one of the best and most ambitious new ensembles in jazz” by *Signal To Noise*. In addition to his work in **The Claudia Quintet**, Wierenga has performed and/or recorded with such artists as **Ensemble Signal**, **Salo**, the **Fireworks Ensemble**, and **David Crowell**. In addition, Wierenga also builds and performs with new interfaces for electroacoustic improvisation, working with analog and digital synthesizers. He received his bachelor’s degree from the **Eastman School of Music**, studying with **Harold Danko**, **Ralph Alessi**, and **Kevin Puts**. After having studied at the **Institute of Sonology** in The Hague with **Joel Ryan** and **Paul Berg**, he is a Ph.D. candidate and **Enhanced Chancellor’s Fellow** at **CUNY Graduate Center**, where his teachers have included **Jason Eckardt** and **Douglas Geers**. Wierenga has taught music appreciation and electronic music at **Baruch College** and currently teaches at the **Brooklyn College Center for Computer Music**.

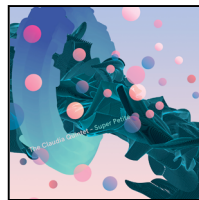
### PROMOTIONAL PHOTOS

Digital [High-Resolution] versions of these images are available on the Claudia Quintet artist page @ [www.cuneiformrecords.com](http://www.cuneiformrecords.com)



### THE CLAUDIA QUINTET ALBUMS ON CUNEIFORM RECORDS

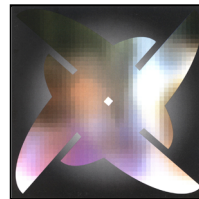
“...The Claudia Quintet...is one of the most exciting groups in contemporary jazz. Each of the discs comes at you with the force of a manifesto: this band knows exactly what it is about, and the compositions charge forward with inevitability. ... the band now sounds so thoroughly integrated and seamless that you'd think it was a tenor trumpet quintet or a 16-piece big band. ...The Claudia Quintet, inimitable, deserves to inspire.”  
- Will Layman, *PopMatters*



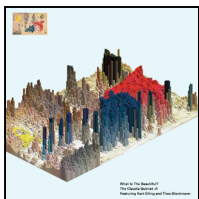
**The Claudia Quintet**  
*Super Petite*  
[2016, Rune 427]



**The Claudia Quintet**  
*September*  
[2013, Rune 377]



**The Claudia Quintet**  
*For*  
[2007, Rune 247]



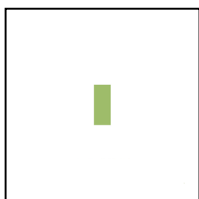
**The Claudia Quintet +1**  
ft. Kurt Elling & Theo Bleckman  
*What is the Beautiful?*  
[2011, Rune 327]



**The Claudia Quintet**  
*Semi-Formal*  
[2005, Rune 217]



**The Claudia Quintet +1**  
with Gary Versace  
*Royal Toast*  
[2010, Rune 307]



**The Claudia Quintet**  
*I, Claudia*  
[2004, Rune 187]

**“The interplay of the Claudias has been magical for a few years now, but the eye-opener here is the intrepid nature of Hollenbeck’s compositional sense. It is simultaneously more refined and more far-reaching on these pieces, and it’s the main reason the disc is so enchanting as a whole. 4 stars”**  
– Jim Macnie, “The Hot Box,” *Downbeat*, January 2014

**“Even when this superb accordion-and vibes-laced quintet is chattering in Morse code or obsessing. Steve Reich-style, over asymmetric chunks of melody, a shimmering spiritual warmth swells up around leader Hollenbeck’s inspired, orchestral drumming. ... 4 stars”**  
– Paul de Barros, “The Hot Box,” *Downbeat*, January 2014

**“...the music is impressionistic, intellectually vexing and emotionally rather evasive. Its elusiveness is part of its charm and frustration. 3 stars”**  
– John McDonough, “The Hot Box,” *Downbeat*, January 2014

**“John Hollenbeck’s Claudia Quintet has a signature sound. Rhythmic modulation, trick times, chamber-y textures, cyclical minimalist devices mix with open and structured improvisation, virtually always hewing to a strong pulse. ... You’d never mistake Claudia for anyone else.**

**When the beat briefly breaks down or evaporates...miraculous little sonic universes open up...everything has a pristine quality, sometimes cool and calculated. ...also an underlying, countervailing warmth, a deep humanity...  
... Hollenbeck has depth as a conjurer of unclassifiable melodies. 4 stars”**

– John Corbett, “The Hot Box,” *Downbeat*, January 2014

**“September,” the group’s inspired new album, gets its name from his custom of composing new work...during that month; each of its 10 pieces bears a date, indicating either a moment of inception or completion.**

**That sounds schematic, but it’s really a loose framework, a way of organizing thoughts and ideas.** The instrumentation of the Claudia Quintet has remained constant...so **Mr. Hollenbeck knows the palette he’s working with...**

**The oldest and most gorgeously melancholy theme here is “12th Coping Song,” a secular hymn inspired by Sept. 11, 2001, that closes the album.** At the other end of the spectrum is the opener, “20th Soterius Lakshmi,”...

**... the bouquet of timbres that Claudia Quintet presents hasn’t lost its freshness:** the slow dawn of “25th Sombre Blanket,” with accordion and clarinet prominent in the mix, represents a proven strategy for the band...

**... there’s a perversely arresting track called “29th, 1936 ‘Me Warn You,’ ” which samples the main passage of Franklin D. Roosevelt’s “smooth evasion” speech — a gem of withering sarcasm, at the expense of his opposing party — and redraws it in Cubist fashion. ...”**

– Nate Chinen, *The New York Times*, September 24, 2013

**“John Hollenbeck and Company’s latest collection of jazz-inflected chamber music is another winner from start to finish.**

**...inspiration shows in this set of tunes named for various days of the month, with some of the most creative and unusual arrangements yet for this consistently interesting ensemble. ... One of the most attention-grabbing pieces is “29<sup>th</sup>: 1936 ‘Me Warn You’”, which takes a recording of a Franklin D. Roosevelt speech and extracts the rhythms and melodic tones of his voice as a melody, which the other instruments then use as material for their playing. It is both a brilliant intellectual achievement and an eminently entertaining experience. ...this group has carved out a niche with their distinctive instrumentation using the diverse acoustic properties to great effect... Hollenbeck’s drumming is outstanding as always... *September* is simply one of 2013’s best releases, and would be a standout in any year.”**

– Jon Davis, *Exposé*, August 1, 2014

**“... *September* is The Claudia Quintet’s seventh-release as the celebrated ensemble reaffirms its domain as an extraordinarily hip and unique entity. ...focus... includes minimalistic oeuvres amid tightly-woven and penetrating rhythmic motifs...**

**The musicians also venture into avant impressionistic formats... on the cleverly patterned “29th 1936 Me Warn You,”.. FDR’s words are occasionally looped as the band shades and mimic his oration into a thematic incursion that rings like a pseudo- documentary...**

**...*September*... imparts another testament to their enduring resilience and idiosyncratic representation of the jazz vernacular. (Passionately recommended...)**

– Glenn Astarita, *All About Jazz*, October 5, 2013, [allaboutjazz.com](http://allaboutjazz.com)

**“... *September*, the album, reflects those times when creativity flourishes and the air alternates between warm and chilly, but also when events alter lives forever. Recording largely without written scores, Claudia’s lineup of Hollenbeck, reedman Chris Speed, Drew Gress or Chris Tordini on bass, accordionist Red Wierenga...and vibraphonist Matt Moran... is ideally suited to capturing the tones and timbres that the month signifies. “25<sup>th</sup>: Sombre Blanket” (each track begins with a composition related date) is **calming in its measured pace of bass and accordion, crystalline in its clarity of vibes and clarinet**, as **Hollenbeck’s drum patter rains into the mix before all the band members coalesce into one of the album’s loveliest buildups.** ...Hollenbeck’s marriage of jazz and experimentalism is most fully realized in “29<sup>th</sup>: 1936: ‘Me Warn You.’ The track’s music is structured around repetitive sampled bits of **Franklin D. Roosevelt’s 1936 Democratic Convention speech... in which the campaigning president railed against the Republican Party’s maliciousness...the cadences of music and voice fully integrate, seeming to carry FDR’s message emphatically into 2013.** Manifesting **Hollenbeck’s** belief in the power of music to lift and heal, the day-after rumination “12<sup>th</sup>: Coping Song” concludes *September* with both remembrance and a foward gaze. ...**4 out of 5 stars.”****

– Dave Lynch, *All Music*, [allmusic.com](http://allmusic.com)

**“...the best jazz is usually produced by groups of musicians who stay together long enough to develop a group sound.**

**...A decade and seven albums later, The Claudia Quintet have carved out their own defiantly androgynous niche in contemporary improvised music. Some call it post jazz,... Whatever you want to call it, this is music that pushes traditional instruments and**

conventional jazz forms into new territory - aesthetically, sonically, and socially.

...For *September*... Each tune is given a date in September when it was “written,” with further enigmatic descriptors...

There are jagged grooves from Hollenbeck and bassist Drew Gress, multi-layered harmonies from vibraphonist Matt Moran and accordionist Red Wierenga, and sinuous melodies from saxophonist Chris Speed. But in the end, it's the freshness of the ensemble sound that sets The Claudia Quintet apart. It's as if this is what music will sound like 100 years from now. 4/5 stars”

- Cormac Larkin, *The Irish Times*, November 29 2013, irishtimes.com

“...The Claudia Quintet has explored the permeable boundaries between genres with single-minded dedication. ...

...The album title is a subtle reminder of the tragic events of September 11, 2001...Hollenbeck drew inspiration from other dates associated with the titular month...**the ensuing works present as diverse an aural landscape as Hollenbeck has ever envisioned for his flagship group.**

... one of the key differences between *September* and the band's previous releases is Hollenbeck's decision to formulate structures that the members could easily navigate from memory, without sheet music... **The result is their loosest performance to date, and easily the best demonstration of the group's adroit interplay on record.**

Another dissimilarity... is the sequencing... This time only two numbers clock in under three minutes, with the longest exceeding ten. These **lengthier compositions** allow individual members to develop their solos in a more egalitarian fashion...

**Unclassifiable by any standard, The Claudia Quintet continues to forge ahead into uncharted territory, drawing on multiple genres and styles for their mellifluous melodies, stately harmonies and captivating grooves,** with *September* one of their most engaging releases.”

- Troy Collins, *Point of Departure*, #44, Sept. 2013, pointofdeparture.org

**“Sensing the tipping point where improvisation undermines a composer's intentions, or composition imprisons good improvisers, is the challenge for musicians who like giving equal weight to both – and the US outfit Claudia Quintet are frontrunners at this tricky game.** ... Moonlit-landscape passages proceed with solemn, frosty deliberation, a 1936 recording of a Franklin D Roosevelt speech is cut, pasted and duplicated over clarinet swoops from Chris Speed, and there are softly ecstatic love themes for high reeds, accordion chords and Drew Gress's wonderful double bass. **The group's unusual instrumentation offers textures few current jazz-based quintets have, and Hollenbeck makes drumming a unique cornerstone to the art of composition. 4 stars.”**

– John Fordham, *The Guardian*, January 9, 2014

“The Claudia Quintet...combines jazz improvisation with thoughtful composition and a myriad of influences that range from pop music to contemporary classical... ‘September 20<sup>th</sup> Soterius Lakshmi’ is an excellent opening to the album, developing a great percussive feel that pulls everyone along in its wake. This sensibility continues and is expanded...The band slows down on some of the more emotional material like ‘September 25<sup>th</sup> Sombre Blanket’ and the 9/11 prayer for peace ‘September 12 Coping Song’...**This is multi-faceted music that often deviates from the expected and is filled with the personalities of its creators making for compelling listening.”**

- Tim Niland, *Music and More*, November 19 2013 jazzandblues.blogspot.com

“Jeff Dayton-Johnson's Best Releases Of 2013... These are the records I kept listening to all year... **Listen to them...and you'll be as sanguine as I am about the vibrancy of the scene – or scenes.** ...The Claudia Quintet, *September* (Cuneiform)”

- Jeff Dayton-Johnson, *All About Jazz* December 22 2013

“Here are...albums that'll be filed in the ‘jazz’ section yet both challenge (and enrich) the idea(s) of what a jazz album can be. ... Speaking of classical chamber styles, The Claudia Quintet has some of that goin' on along with the smooth sophistication of a large jazz group, albeit scaled-down... **Drummer John Hollenbeck's compositions feature deliberate and involving compositions with nods to Philip Glass/John Adams minimalism, the cinematic sound-scapes of eclectic rockers Tortoise, and the lyrical modernism of...Shorter, Carla Bley, and Charles Mingus... No matter how ‘oblique’ Hollenbeck's compositions might (initially) seem, there's always persuasive engaging rhythms buoying things along... The Claudia Quintet's palette is luxuriously full...this is fascinating music with heart. 4 ½/5 stars”**

– Mark Keresman, *Icon*, April 2014

**“Trafficking in a mixture of chamber music, intricate post-rock and jazz, the Claudia Quintet has carved out a distinctive niche...(even if it's a challenge to define...).**

...in the best music there's a sense that someone is talking to you...

Though the 10 pieces are the result of Hollenbeck (for the first time) communicating them to the band without writing them down, **each bears the group's tightly composed signature.** “September 18: Lemons” begins as a cyclical, minimalist-leaning dialogue between Matt Moran's vibraphone and accordionist Red Wierenga (yes, there's an accordion here -- but set your polka prejudices aside) that gracefully fades into an atmospheric midsection before gathering into a menacing churn that becomes a jumping-off point for saxophonist Chris Speed...**the conversation goes on.”**

-Chris Barton, *The Los Angeles Times*, 10 October 2013, latimes.com

**“A drummer/composer/conceptualist continues to astonish with his innovative scope...John Hollenbeck draws on jazz, classical minimalism, impressionism, and avant-garde rock...Employing the unlikely palette of drums, reeds, vibraphone, and bass, Hollenbeck superimposes the hyperkinetic atop the serene, creating fascinating textures and surprising transformations. Employing everything from James Brown-inspired grooves to free and orchestral touches, Hollenbeck's expressive drumming ties it all together. Disorienting yet strangely beautiful, Hollenbeck's ensembles sound like no one else's (Cuneiform).”**

- Jeff Potter, *Modern Drummer*, February 2014, p. 82

**“John Hollenbeck has fashioned his share of attention-grabbing tunes, but few as compelling as ‘September 29<sup>th</sup>, 1936: Me Warn You,’ a highlight of the Claudia Quintet’s shiveringly good new album. A mash-up of reflective music and sonically sliced and diced excerpts from a Franklin D. Roosevelt speech, it basks in the president’s sarcasm in blowing off the opposition for pretending to back his New Deal programs.... through its coiled minimalism and the lucid counter-voices of Matt Moran’s vibes and Chris Speed’s saxophone, the music wins us over by powerfully claiming the human voice as an instrument of its own...Hollenbeck’s subtle absorption of ethnic sounds including Indian and Brazilian further adds to the stylistic depth of the album, which for all its artful texture is one of his most forceful and immediate efforts.”**

- Lloyd Sachs, *Jazz Times*, November 2013

**“Drummer and percussionist John Hollenbeck has proven a master of nuance and flow in many diverse musical contexts, none more so than with his Claudia Quintet, a group that’s also notable for the interplay of longtime members reedman Chris Speed and vibraphonist Matt Moran. Here, Hollenbeck upped his ante with pieces that...he taught the group by ear, without written music: Considering the complexity of and detail of the group’s previous releases, that should have been a challenge.”**

- Blouin Art Info, August 2013, [blogs.artinfo.com/blunotes](http://blogs.artinfo.com/blunotes)

**“...the Claudia Quintet plays as I write this and I remember why... I was attracted to music, why I play it, listen to it, why I’ve been doing these reviews so long... It’s progressive jazz, compositional jazz, jazz that has a sound very much its own, a touch of rock... This is ensemble music of a high sort. It is important music. It is not in any way expected music.... I put it to you, as an example of something that’s excellent about the time we live in.”**

- Grego Applegate Edwards, *GappleGate Guitar and Bass Blog*, February 3, 2014

**“...just listen to the marvelous tones on “September 12<sup>th</sup>: Coping Song” to get a taste of how intriguing this quintet can be. It was the vibrant interaction and high energy on “September 18<sup>th</sup>: Lemons” that got my vote for personal favorite... Intense from the first note all the way through... I give the quintet a MOST HIGHLY RECOMMENDED, with an “EQ” (energy quotient) rating of 4.98.”**

- Dick Metcalf, *Improvjazzation Nation*

**“...some music embraces the silence on which it is painted... Silence is a regular term: it can mean a sense of air around the notes...and in this regards certain instruments are more telling than others.**

**Vibraphone is king, its every note seeming to have air swishing around it. Accordion and clarinet are others, and these three colours are central to the aerated sound of the Claudia Quintet, the New York band that realises the unique sonic dreams of drummer John Hollenbeck.**

**...Hollenbeck writes cosmopolitan melodies that are by turns charming and wistful, sometimes underpinning them with surprisingly knotty rhythms, given that the end music is seldom dense. Clarinetist Chris Speed can play storming tenor saxophone when required, and the bass of either Drew Gress or Chris Tordini completes the line-up with accordionist Red Wierenga and vibraphonist Matt Moran. Have a listen. It is like a breath of fresh air.”** - John Shand, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, [smh.com.au](http://smh.com.au)

**“The Claudia Quintet...a distinctly unique sound that blends elements of free jazz and post-rock which is further underpinned by the instrumentation which includes vibes and accordion. ...September is an album that boldly ventures into musical territories that few others dare to explore...an album that warrants repeated listens.”**

- Sean Smith, *Tokyo Jazz Notes*, 23 February 2014, [tokyojazznotes.blogspot.com](http://tokyojazznotes.blogspot.com)

**“September faithfully follows and builds upon The Claudia Quintet’s past explorations into minimalism, freethinking improvisation, challenging rhythms, and deeply deliberate, intertextual musings. ...**

**...the culminating track, ‘12<sup>th</sup>: Coping Song’...seeks to unify and express Hollenbeck’s personal memories of and feelings associated with the September 11 attacks. It’s haunting, moving and beautifully executed and, like most tunes on this album, reminds us why The Claudia Quintet is still one of the most exciting groups on the scene today.”**

- Sam Spokony, *The New York City Jazz Record*, October 2013

**“...this is an ensemble that bucks the commonplace assumptions of jazz... There is an enormous degree of invention and imagination in play here...creative choices that rigorously discount the usual limitations and boundaries of jazz compositions. There is a lot of probing improvisation from a band of extremely accomplished musicians, but there is an equal (or greater) amount of structured ensemble writing, and although much of the material is quite challenging to the ear, its radical force does not rob it of aesthetic appeal. Both fiercely intelligent and empathically beautiful, September is an album that can only have resulted from a sustained and intensive feat of concentration, with not a single lazy gesture or idiomatic cliché from start to finish. Extraordinary compositions, brilliantly performed.”**

- Olive Ardit, March 26, 2014. [oliverarditi.com](http://oliverarditi.com)

**“The music of drummer and compose John Hollenbeck omnivorously draws from jazz, post-rock and contemporary classical traditions.”**

- WQXR, October 2 2013

**“...John Hollenbeck has been able to keep his Claudia Quintet viable long after its original formation in the late 90s by continually tossing new challenges at it...**

**September returns the band back to a true quintet, but Hollenbeck made changes...Red Wierenga is the accordion player...the other test...was to introduce his already-knotted, tightly wound compositions to the group not through documentation but mostly by ear... Hollenbeck’s usual genius is very much present... He devises not just complex rhythms but threads of rhythms interwoven together... For “September 24<sup>th</sup> Interval Dig” he comes up with inventive beats, interwoven with the harmony impossibly tight.**

**Ironically this is his most straightforward song, and yet there's little conventional about it...**

"September 29th 1936 'Me Warn You'" stands as the most amazing performance on *September*. ... From the recorded words of FDR springs forth the melodic elements... It's a real revelation in that Hollenbeck's songs often do sound like this, resembling human speech in their flow.

**...September continues their ability to amaze in new ways. When both composing and musicianship are always at the highest level, it's hard not to.**

-S. Victor Aaron, *Something Else!*, 20 September 2013, [somethingelserreviews.com](http://somethingelserreviews.com)

**The 2013 NPR Music Jazz Critics Poll: 8th Annual Jazz Critics Poll: 2013**, <http://hullworks.net/jazzpoll/13/totals-new.php>

#75. · **Claudia Quintet, *September* (Cuneiform) 23 (5)**

Bob Blumenthal (freelance)

NEW RELEASES

6. Claudia Quintet, *September* (Cuneiform)

David Fricke (Rolling Stone)

NEW RELEASES

6. Claudia Quintet, *September* (Cuneiform)

Richard Gehr (Village Voice, eMusic)

NEW RELEASES

8. Claudia Quintet, *September* (Cuneiform)

Sergio Piccirilli (El Instruso)

NEW RELEASES

4. Claudia Quintet, *September* (Cuneiform)

Gene Seymour

NEW RELEASES

8. Claudia Quintet, *September* (Cuneiform)" ***Jazz Critics Poll*, 2013**

"Song of the Day, 13 Feb 2014... **'September 12<sup>th</sup>: Coping Song' by the Claudia Quintet**...Today's pick is an intriguing piece of music by one of the most progressive and influential jazz groups around today."

- *Next Jazz*, 13 February 2014 [nextjazz.com](http://nextjazz.com)

"It was the vibrant interaction and high energy on **"September 18th: Lemons"** that got my vote for personal favorite... **intense from the first note and all the way through to the 10:35 conclusion**. I give the quintet a MOST HIGHLY RECOMMENDED, with an "EQ" (energy quotient) rating of 4.98."

- Dick Metcalf, *Improvjazzation Nation*, [rotcodzzaj.com](http://rotcodzzaj.com)

"...Wierenga's accordion intones the tune of the ten-minute *Wayne Phases*, quickly followed by Moran's vibraphone. Clearly, Hollenbeck wants to leverage the harmony and contrast of the timbres of these two instruments. Appropriately, when Speed's saxophone jumps in, the music, that was so lively, implodes. ...the cubistic vignette of *Loop Piece* (penned by anarchic percussion) and the contrabass-led Brazilian-tinged *Interval Dig*...broaden Hollenbeck's already gigantic palette."

-Piero Scaruffi, *Scaruffi*, [scaruffi.com](http://scaruffi.com)

"...I was piped aboard this vessel by... 'September 29th, 1936: 'Me Warn You',' in which the voice of FDR, sarcastically chiding his Republican fat-cat opposition for their empty promises of out-dealing the New Deal, is carved up, sampled, mixed, mimicked and harmonized with throughout by this eclectic chamber ensemble led by percussionist John Hollenbeck...Once you get past the wonder of hearing instrumental correlatives to Roosevelt's memorable pipes and recognize the sly contemporary references...about seven minutes in...the group, collectively and individually, starts laying down its own cheeky variations on the president's joke. **This open-ended interplay typifies the rest of the album – a series of sound mosaics and tone poems devoted to the month that Hollenbeck prefers to use as time for reflection and contemplation**. There's a witty birthday salute to the unavoidable Mr. Shorter...ballad...and, inevitably, a 9/11 piece...that closes the disc on with introspection that never becomes maudlin. **It's taken me longer than it probably should to have climbed aboard Claudia's bandwagon**...But I plan to check back with them."

-Gene Seymour, *That Gene Seymour*, 6 December 2013

### ***Features/Interviews:***

**John Hollenbeck's September Songs" by Jeff Dayton-Johnson, *All About Jazz*, October 7, 2013**

**"John Hollenbeck's productivity would be astonishing in its own right, but the uniformly high quality of this high output places the drummer among the top tier of jazz (and not only jazz) musicians...** As befits a 21st century drummer, he is rhythmically complex but the music is underlain with a deep groove. He borrows ecumenically from a diversity of musical (including the rhythms of the spoken word) sources and manages to synthesize those varied resources into a coherent creative expression. Hollenbeck's flagship project is the Claudia Quintet... With *September* (Cuneiform, 2013), the quintet's output rises to "7. 3 albums"..."

**"I, Claudia: John Hollenbeck talks to marlbank about writing music that could be learned by rote or memorised, his biggest influence as a drummer...**

***What would you say are the most distinctive features of Claudia Quintet's new record, September?...***

For us the process was very different. I tried to write some music that could be learned by rote or memorized... my direction tends toward music that would be difficult to learn with paper. Also, there are 1.5 new members on this record. Red Wierenga has taken over from Ted Reichman, and Red brings quite a different aesthetic. Also, on half of the tracks Chris Tordini is filling in for Drew Gress... Overall, I would say it is looser than previous records.

***Is this "post-jazz" label attached to the Claudia Quintet helpful...?***



-Marlbank, 23 November 2013, marlbank.net

– Daniel Spicer, *BBC*, November 9, 2011

– Chris Barton, *Los Angeles Times*, October 19, 2011

- Patrick Jarenwattananon, *NPR Music*, [www.npr.org](http://www.npr.org)

– Joe Tangari, *Pitchfork*, August 19, 2010

- Troy Collins, *All About Jazz*, July 01, 2007

—David R. Adler, *JazzTimes*

–Bill Tilland, *All Music Guide*, [www.allmusic.com](http://www.allmusic.com)