

**A
FRENCHMAN
IN
NEW YORK**

**PAUL LAY TRIO
& ORCHESTRA**

ORIGINAL CREATION

A FRENCHMAN IN NEW YORK

Driven by his passion for American music, Paul Lay composed in 2023 a work for jazz trio and symphony orchestra, freely inspired by the iconic symphonic poem *An American in Paris*, written in 1928 for Vincente Minnelli's film of the same name. Tracing the journey of a Frenchman arriving in New York, Lay positions his piece as a counterpoint to both the music and the narrative of George Gershwin's original work.

The result is a vibrant, richly textured portrait of the world capital of jazz, while also shedding light on the many musical correspondences between the Old and New Worlds, between written and improvised music. The piece mirrors the city of New York itself—a global cultural hub whose unique dynamism and energy have shaped its legendary status.

The starting point of the compositional process is a residency scheduled for autumn 2023, during which Paul Lay will explore the city's countless facets, absorbing the atmosphere of its diverse neighborhoods, its contemporary pulse, and its underground vitality.

During my years of study at the Paris Conservatoire (CNSMDP), I had the opportunity to immerse myself in the symphonic world—not only through concerts, but also by studying orchestral scores in depth, which I explored with great curiosity. I was particularly steeped in the harmonies and writing of Gershwin, Ravel, Dutilleux, Messiaen, Elliott Carter, and John Adams. Their musical worlds profoundly shaped my imagination.

This symphonic work will last approximately twenty minutes, during which the orchestra will engage in dialogue with the members of my jazz piano trio: Matyas Szandai on double bass and Donald Kontomanou on drums.



CONCERTS VIDEOS ON «
PAUL LAY OFFICIAL »
CHANNEL



PAUL LAY PIANO

Steeped in the Western musical tradition, Paul Lay has always felt a deep connection to the African American heritage embracing jazz, but also blues, swing, and gospel. With one foot in classical music and the other in jazz, he explores and revisits these traditions through tributes to the geniuses who shaped them, as well as through his own original creations.

Widely recognized as “one of the greatest jazz pianists of his generation” (Le Monde), Paul Lay has received some of the most prestigious awards, including the Grand Prix of the Académie Charles Cros in 2014 for his album *Mikado*, for which he composed all the pieces. This recording established him internationally as a singular creative voice. His widely acknowledged talent as a composer has enabled him to lead a range of projects under his own name, in solo formats (Full Folo), as well as in duos and trios. Throughout his programs, Paul Lay weaves an invisible thread linking his dual heritage—classical music and jazz—and the influences rooted on both sides of the Atlantic.

A key moment in his artistic development was the multidisciplinary project *Billie Holiday, Passionately*, a tribute to one of the most iconic figures of blues and jazz. His passion for American culture also led him to create a program in homage to Louis Armstrong, performed repeatedly in duo with trumpeter Éric Le Lann. Reflecting on the 2018 album *Thanks a Million*, Laurent de Wilde remarked: “He achieved the tour de force of playing in a very old style while remaining utterly modern—bold, adventurous, and forward-looking.”

Around the same time, Paul Lay and his trio—featuring Isabel Sörling and Simon Tailleu—took part in *The Bridge*, a project celebrating the 100th anniversary of the first jazz concert in France. Upon returning from New York, they recorded *Deep Rivers*, built around American folk songs ranging from the Civil War to the Roaring Twenties. Released in 2020 to critical acclaim, the album firmly established Paul Lay’s reputation as an arranger and master colorist. Continuing their exploration of popular repertoires from the 19th and 20th centuries, Paul Lay and his trio ventured into new, more European territories, notably with the program *Vagabonds*, premiered at La Folle Journée de Nantes in 2022.

Accompanied by Clemens van der Feen and Dré Pallemerts, Paul Lay has recorded three albums, including a 2022 release dedicated to Bill Evans. *Un Français à New York* stands as a natural continuation of this ongoing artistic journey.

EXCEPTIONAL HARMONIC IMAGINATION, REMARKABLE VERSATILITY, HIGHLY ENGAGING COMPOSITIONS, AND A CLEAR MASTERY OF JAZZ HISTORY, PAUL LAY HAS A DISTINCTLY PERSONAL VOICE. HE HAS EVERYTHING IT TAKES TO ENDURE!

MARTIAL SOLAL

BOOKING ET MANAGEMENT

Diane du Saillant

Tel : +33 (0)1 42 81 38 21

agencedianedusaillant@gmail.com