

# Paul Lay, Jazz Pianist and Composer

“Excellent harmonic imagination, highly varied playing, very interesting compositions, and an evident knowledge of jazz history. Paul Lay has everything it takes to last!” — Martial Solal

After studying at the CNSMD in Paris, Paul Lay released his first trio album, « Unveiling », in 2010, which garnered attention immediately : « Paul Lay already has all the qualities of a great artist, with his knowledge of jazz history, harmonic imagination, and a poetic universe far from any conventional 'pianism'. » — *Citizen Jazz*

Universally recognized as « one of the greatest jazz pianists of his generation » (*Le Monde*), Paul Lay has won numerous prestigious awards, including the Grand Prize of the Charles Cros Academy in 2014 for his album « Mikado », which established him on the international scene as a creator. Named Instrumental Artist of the Year at the Victoires du Jazz (2020), Paul Lay is the recipient of many prestigious accolades, such as the Soloist Prize at the La Défense Competition, Moscow Jazz Piano Competition, Martial Solal Competition, Montreux Competition, and the Django Reinhardt Prize from the French Jazz Academy.

An initiator of unique collaborations, Paul created the video-musical performance « Billie Holiday, Passionately » with videographer Olivier Garouste for the La Folle Journée festival in Nantes (2015). This project was performed at the Philharmonie de Paris, La Roque d'Anthéron Festival, and the French May Festival in Hong Kong. As a sought-after sideman, Paul has also been part of the ensembles of Riccardo Del Fra, Géraldine Laurent, Eric le Lann, and Ping Machine.

In 2017, he released two albums, « The Party » (with Dre Pallemmaerts and Clemens Van Der Feen) and « Alcazar Memories » (with Isabel Sörling and Simon Tailleu), two unique trios that performed in over 70 concerts around the world.

At the end of 2018, Paul released « Thanks a Million », a duo album with Eric le Lann, which paid a heartfelt tribute to Louis Armstrong and was particularly acclaimed.

Frequently invited abroad, Paul Lay has performed in New York, Toronto, Berlin, Warsaw, and toured extensively in Germany, Russia, Peru, Mexico, the Dominican Republic, China, and Japan.

Paul is also an awardee of sponsorships and programs that make him an official representative of French jazz. This led to performances for the International Jazz Day alongside Barbara Hendricks, as part of Marseille European Capital of Culture in 2013, The Bridge in 2017, and with the Centenary Mission for World War I commemorations.

His album « Deep Rivers », with Isabel Sörling and Simon Tailleu, was released in January 2020 and was a great success, leading to about 50 concerts in 2020-2021.

In June 2021, Paul released his first solo piano album « Full Solo » under the Gazebo label, featuring unique recreations of Beethoven's works. Upon release, the album topped the Fnac Jazz/Blues charts and received multiple accolades, including the Victoires du Jazz.

Since then, Paul's collaborative projects involving commissioned compositions have grown. In 2024, several new projects emerged. Paul composed part of the soundtrack for Mark Gill's film « Ravens », presented at the Cannes Festival. That same year, he created an original program with the Chœur de chambre Les Eléments titled « Waves of Light », for which he composed several pieces for choir and jazz trio. 2024 also marks the debut of Paul Lay's symphonic version of Gershwin's « Rhapsody in Blue », performed twice with the Strasbourg Philharmonic Orchestra and the Avignon-Provence Regional Orchestra. After his 2022 album « Blue in Green: Tribute to Bill Evans » under the Scala Music label, Paul is set to release a new trio album, « L'Odysée », in the fall of 2024 under Gazebo. This original work, freely inspired by Homer's « Odyssey » and composed entirely by Lay, solidifies his position as a composer.

Since September 2022, Paul Lay has been a jazz piano professor at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Paris.

Since 2017, he has been supported by the BNP Paribas Foundation for the development of his career.