



Clermont-Ferrand, France
Info@sacapulses.com www.sacapulses.com

sac à pulses



Gary Kiser

English Speaking Contact
117, rue Fontgiève
63000 Clermont-Ferrand, France
tel:(33) 473 19 11 44
fax:(33) 473 61 52 17
info@sacapulses.com
<http://www.sacapulses.com>

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The region of *Auvergne* in Central France is best known for its volcanoes, its delicious cheese and its miserable wine. *Puy de Dôme*, *Saint Nectaire* and headaches in the morning are traditional features of the region. Another notable landmark, **Sac à Pulses**, a New Orleans style jazz band from Clermont-Ferrand, the capital of Auvergne, has been praised as one of France's finest jazz ensembles.

Sac à Pulses serves up jazz instrumentals and vocals in a cocktail of styles: 2- & 4-beat swing, Charleston, beguine, blues, boogie-woogie, Cajun and modern New Orleans parade rhythms are all on their rhythmic buffet. Dancers and concert goers, seasoned jazz fans and casual listeners, the young and the not-so-young are all equally satisfied.

Although **Sac à Pulses'** instrumentation somewhat mimics the late Sidney Bechet's Parisian bands, their influences don't stop there. **Sac à Pulses** has plucked tunes from the legendary repertoires of Fats Waller, Jelly Roll Morton, Louis Armstrong, King Oliver, Bix Beiderbecke, Duke Ellington, and the Original Dixieland Jazz Band, among many others. Furthermore, **Sac à Pulses** has written French lyrics to many of the classic jazz standards, consequently presenting a new twist to familiar melodies. **Sac à Pulses** also plays popular French songs by the likes of George Brassens, Jacques Brel and Edith Piaf.

As well, **Sac à Pulses** plays some of the more modern sounds coming out of Louisiana today. The funky sound of the Dirty Dozen Brass Band and the Rebirth Brass Band, the Cajun jazz sound of Winton Marsalis and the Latin beguine sound of Eddy Louiss are well represented in our concerts.

Sac à Pulses has played in every corner of France and almost every country in Europe. The group is as effective in the intimate setting of a nightclub or opening for Dee Dee Bridgewater to 5000 people. They have played Hungary, toured the Persian Gulf (Qatar, Oman, United Arab Emirates, Yemen) for the French Ministry of Culture and has made four festival tours in the United States.

In 2005, **Sac à Pulses** will play the Sacramento (CA) Jazz Jubilee over Memorial Day Weekend, a concert for the Norman (OK) Summer Breeze Concert series on July 31 and then, the Orange County (CA) Jazz Festival Aug. 4-7.

The name **Sac à Pulses** literally means *sack of pulses* or *rhythm bag*. This is a play on words in French. The French use the same expression for an old dog as in English, *flea bag* or *sac à puce*. Considering the words *pulses* and *puce* are pronounced similarly, the name **Sac à Pulses** on our bass drum solicits many smiles from our French audiences.

Sac à Pulses' latest recording, *Passport to Paradise*, is a tribute to the compositions of Sydney Bechet. We have a show (on demand) dedicated to Bechet's music. Although Bechet's recordings heavily influence our show, we don't try to copy what he played. Instead, we do our own treatment to his wonderful creations.

Sac à Pulses' recordings

Passport to Paradise (CD 2002)
Les Pulses (CD-1995)

C'est Pas Ma Faute (CD 1999)
Them There Eyes (CD 1993)

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Liner Notes for *C'est Pas Ma Faute* by Floyd Levin

There is no set standard for jazz bands - they come in all sizes, shapes, colors, and orientation. Since the genre was conceived almost a century ago in New Orleans, it has attained worldwide acceptance. Over the years, the spirited music has been tinged with various accents by bands in many lands. None has achieved the unique quality of the French favorites, Sac à Pulses.

The band's most recent U.S. appearances in October 1999 included the Tenth Annual SoCal Jazzfest in Buena Park, California; the 11th Annual Jazz Jubilee in Medford, Oregon and the Tenth Annual Swing 'n' Dixie Jazz Jamboree in Sun Valley, Idaho. I caught up with them in Buena Park. During that weekend, the high energy Sac à Pulses put their lively Gallic spin on classic American jazz numbers from King Oliver to Wynton Marsalis. The band was tremendously successful and provided an interesting contrast to the other stellar attractions at the event.

The youthful verve that has established Sac à Pulses as international favorites is apparent throughout this CD. During this expanded program, written by a variety of great American composers, they brilliantly shape 15 tunes into their own brilliant mold.

Their unorthodox front line spotlights Christian Vaudecranne's soprano saxophone, scat singing, and lively kazoo choruses, and trombonist Pierre Guicquéro, inspired by the late Trummy Young. Gary Kiser's resonating tuba adds a strong bass underpinning to Marc Verne's solid percussion and Pierre Verne's tenor guitar. (François Lenoble plays banjo and guitar on the nine numbers.)

This is the band I heard in the lobby bar of the Buena Park Hotel. I listened and watched as their performance thrilled the audience and rattled the large chandelier three floors above them.

Floyd Levin was voted "Number One Jazz Journalist" in "Mississippi Rag's" recent readers' poll. His forthcoming book, "CLASSIC JAZZ – A Personal View of the Music and the Musicians," will soon be published by University of California Press.

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The Musicians

Pierre Guicquéro

trombone and vocals

Pierre, the band's leader and youngest member, sports an impressive resumé. Aside from his tailgate chores with Sac à Pulses, he is the trombone soloist with the Paris Swing Orchestra and the Big Band Turquoise of Cournon and he is a founding member of the latin jazz group Caliente featuring Miguel Fiannica. Pierre has shared the stage with Daniel Huck, Jean-Loup Longnon and Laïka.

Christian Vaudecranne

Soprano Saxophone and Vocals

Christian quit a career as a graphic artist to take up his passion professionally. In addition to his extraordinary saxophone playing, he is known throughout France for his exciting and unique scatting. His face-to-face relationship with the audience adds a lot of excitement to our concerts. Christian was guest of honor at the 1994 Sidney Bechet Tribute at the Casino de Paris.

Marc Verne

drums and washboard

Marc is called on to play as far away as Poland where he is part of East-West Connection. Closer to home, he is the regular drummer with the Big Band Turquoise of Cournon and is a founding member of the group Zagayak, a local group playing jazz from the Antilles. He has backed up Pierre Boussaguet, Daniel Huck, Georges Arvanitas, Jérôme Barde and Jean-Loup Longnon.

Gary Kiser

tuba and vocals

Gary, originally from California, joined the group in December of 1992. Gary was Rosy McHargue's tuba man from 1980 to 1991 and has played with Eddie Erickson, Joe Darensburg, Alton Purnell, Sue Kroninger and Gary Ryan. In France, has played with Eddy Louiss, Daniel Huck, the Riverboat Shufflers and the Mojo Brass Band, a brass funk quartet. Gary also produced Thanks For The Melody on KCRW 89.9FM in Santa Monica for 10 years and has been involved with the production of countless concerts, festivals and live radio broadcasts in the States and in France.

Pierre 'Jules' Verne

tenor guitar and banjo

Banjo and tenor guitar with Sac à Pulses, Jules is one of the most sought after double bass men in Auvergne -- and, he was only semi-pro until just a couple of years ago. In 1997, he sold his office supply business to concentrate on music full time. Although rather discrete on stage, Jules plays a big part in the rhythmic foundation of the group. In case you're curious, yes, he is Marc's older brother.

Since its formation in 1986, **Sac à Pulses** has performed at a diverse array of events.

Festivals

SzegeDixie Festival, Szeged, Hungary (98);
Sacramento Traditional Jazz Jubilee, Sacramento, CA, USA (96, 05);
Swing 'n' Dixie Jazz Jamboree, Sun Valley, ID, USA (94, 99, 01);
Glacier Jazz Stampede, Kalispell, MT, USA (94, 01);
Norman Summer Breeze Concert Series, OK, USA (05);
Orange County Jazz Festival, CA, USA (05);
Monségur 24 Hours du Swing Festival (91, 92, 93, 94, 98, 99);
Medford Jazz Jubilee, Medford, OR, USA (99);
Jubilee By The Sea, Pismo Beach, CA, USA (99, 01);
SoCal JazzFest, Buena Park, CA, USA (99);
Sancy Snow Jazz Festival, Mont Dore (1991 - 2005);
St. Gilles Croix de Vie Jazz Festival (95, 98);
Marseille Jazz Festival (00);
Cussac Fort Medoc (01);
Vannes Jazz Festival (95, 98);
Harbor Festival, Morro Bay, CA, USA (99);
Millau en Jazz (99);
Festival du Mourjeoux (00);
Souillac "Sim Coppans" Jazz Festival (94, 00);
Dixieland Santa Nella, Santa Nella, CA, USA (99);
Keswick Jazz Festival, Keswick, England (98);
Jazz en Auvergne Festival (90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 99, 01);
Jazz en Tête Festival, Clermont-Ferrand (91, 92, 93, 95, 98);
Summer Concert Series, Château Rochebaron (93, 96);
Festival Jazz aux Sources, Châtel Guyon (99, 00, 01, 02, 03);
Festival de Blues, Cahors (96, 97);
Festival Jazz Dans Le Bocage, Allier (00, 01);
Alsasua Navarre Festival, Spain (90);
Apostolo Santiago de Compostela Music Festival, Spain (92);
Carcassonne OFF Festival (93);
Clermont-Ferrand Short Film Festival (94);
Festival Jazz en Tourraine, Montlouis (96);
Forum en Fête, Forum des Halles, Paris (94, 95);
Jazz on Wednesdays, Bergerac (93, 96);
Jazz à Ramatuel, Ramatuel (96);
Huesca Theatre Festival, Spain (90);
Jazz aux Remparts Festival, Bayonne (96);
Besse Wine Fair, Besse (93, 95);
Jazz en Limousin Festival, La Souterrainne (95);
La Lyre des Mineurs Music Festival (94);
Le Vert Super Besse Jazz Festival (91, 92, 95);
Le Vigan Comedy Festival (91, 92, 93, 96);
Manosque Jazz Festival (92, 95);
Ambert Marionette Festival (89, 90, 91);
Montauban Jazz Festival (90, 93);
Münster International Jazz Festival, France (94);
Roannais Jazz Festival (92);
Sorgues Jazz Festival (92);
Baie de Douarnenez Jazz Festival (92);
St. Germain l'Herm Arts Festival (94);
Tarrega Theatre Festival, Spain (89);
Vic Sur Cère Intl. Folklore, Dance & Music Festival (93, 95);
Villeneuve sùr Lot Jazz Festival (92);
Paradise's Follies Carnival, Champvert, Switz. (94);
Carnival of Aulnat (92, 94);
Carnival of Clermont-Ferrand (95);
Carnival of Le Puy en Velay (88, 89, 90, 91);
Carnival of Macon (92);
Carnival of Orbe, Switzerland (93).

Cultural Representation

Wilhemshaven French Follies Festival, Germany (90);
700th Annivrsary Swiss Confederation, Rances, Switzerland (91);
Alliance Française, Sabadell, Spain (94);
Cultural exchange, Aberdeen, Scotland, sister city to Clermont-Fd (94);
French & American Embassies to Oman, Mascat (93);
French Cultural Center, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emerits (93);
French Cultural Center, Sana'a, Yemen (93);
French Embassy to Qatar in Doha (93).

Notable Events

"Jacadi" Seminar, Palma de Majorque;
Chamineige (93, 94);
Congres de la FEN, Clermont-Ferrand;
French National Chambers of Commerce Convention;
Patio de Luces, Madrid, Spain;
Puy de Dôme Mayors Convention;
Puy de Dôme Chambers of Commerce Convention;
Randaubade (89, 91, 93).

Notable Clients

Amnesty International;
Cafe de Paris, Le Mont Dore;
Union Syndicale des Journalistes Sportifs de France;
Center Parcs, Bourges;
Friends of the Upton Upon Severn Jazz Festival, UK;
Casino of Aix les Bains;
The Crown, Boston Spa, England;
Toby Jug Inn, Chilton Polden, England;
Radio "Puy de Dôme", Clermont-Ferrand;
Caveau de la Huchette, Paris;
Clevedon Jazz Club, UK;
Le Petit Journal, Paris;
Chamina;
Château Chazeron;
Château Ravel;
Château Vollore;
Château Rochebaron;
Casino of Le Mont Dore;
Casino of Royat;
Crédit Agricole Bank;
Hot Club de Lyon;
Restaurant Le Paradis, Royat;
Jazz Brass, Cusset;
Clevedon Jazz Club, England;
Jazz Club de Aix les Bains;
Jazz Club de Limoges;
Kiwanis Club de Gray;
Lions Club de Montluçon;
Michelin, Clermont Ferrand;
La Montagne, Clermont Ferrand;
Musique Vivante, Vichy;
Radio "ArVerne", Clermont-Ferrand;