



Bio information: **THE KANDINSKY EFFECT**

Title: **SOMNAMBULIST** (Cuneiform Rune 408) Format: CD / DIGITAL

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**FILE UNDER: JAZZ / POST-JAZZ**

**Weaving Jazz & Post-Rock, Soundscapes & Electronica  
Into Tunes that Transcend Genre, Place, and Time  
Globetrotting Trio, The Kandinsky Effect,  
Create *Somnambulist*,  
A Sonic Journey through 21<sup>st</sup> Century Jazz Dreamtime**

On *Somnambulist*, **The Kandinsky Effect** wields its musical power in a welcoming way. Their 3rd album (and 2nd for **Cuneiform Records**) isn't form-eschewing free jazz, nor are the tonalities the trio employs particularly "out." The real revelation – and *revolution* – comes simply in the way saxophonist **Warren Walker**, bassist **Gael Petrina**, and drummer **Caleb Dolister** organize *sound*.

The Paris-and-New York-based trio is a purist's nightmare -- and not only that of a *jazz* purist either. Since their first, self-titled album came out in 2010, **The Kandinsky Effect** has been boldly blending jazz with elements of everything from hip-hop to electronic music, making for an idiosyncratic amalgam that never goes exactly where you might expect it to.

If you can envision a world in which a contemporary jazz giant like **Joshua Redman** jams with **The Roots** and electronic instigator **Aphex Twin**, then you have a head start on your ability to assimilate the sound of *Somnambulist*. But nothing can completely prepare you for its marriage of groove, atmosphere, and incendiary playing.

The Kandinsky Effect feel that this album is their most effectively conceived collection of music to date. "I feel like I had a clearer idea of what I was looking for in the sound of my compositions and how to approach writing for this group," says bandleader Walker, "it's a sort of coming-of-age piece."

For an album so full of fire, *Somnambulist* has some surprisingly leisurely origins. Much of the material was composed by Walker in **Dominical, Costa Rica**, during a lengthy stay in a beach-side shack. "I was there for a few months just writing music," he recalls, "playing saxophone and surfing to see what would come out from me compositionally in a totally different, non-city environment."

As it turns out, though, there was a fair amount of psychic friction to be found in the aforementioned seemingly bucolic environment during Walker's time there. "**Tagzhout**" was written in **Tagzhout**, a small fishing/surfing village in **Morocco**," explains Walker. "It was written on the day of **Eid**, a religious holiday where everyone slaughters a goat in the street. To me the whole experience was very dark, and there was blood everywhere on the streets. On the days leading up to it people are driving with live goats tied to their roof...witnessing these things may have shaped this tune a little."

But that tune, with Walker's bobbing and weaving sax riding the roiling rhythms of Petrina and Dolister, isn't the only one with a dark backstory. And Walker's compositions aren't the only ones on *Somnambulist* born in exotic locales. Petrina's tunes were written in **San Remo, Italy** and **Tulum, Mexico**, while the origin for one of Dolister's works, "**Annabelle Chases a Bug**," can be traced to memories of a cat in **Nashville, Tennessee**. Another Dolister tune, "**Sad Fly**" has its origins as one of the accompaniments to a decidedly quirky animated film named *Spacefish*, which the drummer describes thusly: "In the animation, 'Sad Flies' are a swarm of tiny insects that play sad music to trick unsuspecting travelers, slowly leading them into a massive suicidal depression so that they can feed on their eventual corpses." Don't be *too* afraid though, Dolister says, "the version **Kandinsky Effect** plays is nowhere near as dark, but much more about *developing* a feeling of apprehension."

The ability to incorporate a broad range of musical, geographical, and emotional influences into their music is at the core of The Kandinsky Effect's makeup. Formed 2007 in Paris, France, the original lineup began performing as the **Warren Walker Trio**, and included Petrina and Parisian drummer **Gautier Garrigue**. Not long after, they named themselves **The Kandinsky Effect** in homage to Russian painter **Wassily Kandinsky**, and recorded a self-named album, released in 2010 on **SNP Records**. While influenced by hip-hop and electronics, their debut album was much more rooted in jazz and featured mostly acoustic instrumentation. Dolister joined for The Kandinsky Effect's **Cuneiform** debut, 2013's *Synesthesia*, which began to expand the band's sound, blending everything from Petrina's fondness for electronica (**IDM**) to Dolister's love of heavy rock bands like **Meshuggah**, and Walker's unique approach to composition and electronic soundscapes.

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Over the years, the group has traveled extensively to perform with multiple trips and tours to Europe, Asia, and North America, perfecting what Dolister calls their "intellectual groove instrumental music." And from the slip-sliding beats and slithering sax lines of opening track "**Copalchi Distress Signal**" to the insistent pulse and layered, lyrical melodies of closing cut "**Muji**," there's a feeling of the refinement process reaching fruition on *Somnambulist*.

"*Somnambulist* is definitely a step forward when it comes to composition and execution," assesses Dolister. "The album documents the growth and identity of the band over the last several years... that's displayed the most in the compositions. This is the band's first record in which all of the songs were composed or arranged with the intention of being on this record. ...we coordinated the writing to decide whether each composition would compliment or contrast another, or create a certain reaction, or use a specific theme. ...this gives the album a much stronger listening experience from start to finish. We learned a lot from making our previous album, *Synesthesia*...With *Somnambulist*, we had a much clearer idea of how to approach the recording process. In general, *Somnambulist* is a much more cohesive statement."

*for more information about the Kandinsky Effect:*

[www.thekandinskyeffect.com](http://www.thekandinskyeffect.com) – [www.facebook.com/TheKandinskyEffect](https://www.facebook.com/TheKandinskyEffect) – [www.cuneiformrecords.com](http://www.cuneiformrecords.com)

### PROMOTIONAL PHOTOS

Digital [High-Resolution] versions of these images are available for download on **The Kandinsky Effect** artist page @ [www.cuneiformrecords.com](http://www.cuneiformrecords.com)



### *What the press has said about:*

**THE KANDINSKY EFFECT**

**SYNESTHESIA**

**CUNEIFORM 2013**

"...Without a chordal instrument, and with the addition of restrained electronica (often put to the service of harmonic layering), walls dissolve and cross-boundary work ensues. ... The sax takes on a very clear and direct role. Walker is not afraid of space and not afraid to embrace a legato feel, and his choices feel quite radical that way. He also creates arcs of phrasing that seem to move from tune to tune... As for Petrina, his groove will appeal to dubstep fans into subliminal bass sound exploration as well as lovers of jazz innovators such as Jaco Pastorius... Rhythmically, the Kandinsky Effect offers a grand array that combines rave-inspired electronica, dexterous high-end heavy metal, classical pastoral work, bass-driven contemporary jazz and the Zen idea of the Beginner's Mind (meaning open to what is not yet)."

-Monique Avakian, *The Free Jazz Collective*, 11 February 2013

"A band whose members hail from the USA and France, a band name taken from that of a Russian painter, a recording studio in Iceland and tune titles that reference an English town... a Mexican souvenir retailer... and a Danish film director... all give the Kandinsky Effect's second album, *Synesthesia*, a distinctly international flavor. The music continues this global theme, drawing its inspiration from contemporary dance and electronic musics, as well as from jazz, to create tunes that reflect their times rather than a single geographical location.

Effects are often used sparingly, or to create subtle shifts in tone or mood... The music on *Synesthesia* has an impressive range as a result of this varied mix of electronic and acoustic. "Brighton" and "Cusba" show the band at its most acoustic—lovely slices of laidback jazz... *Synesthesia* is an inventive album, a relatively rare example of an egalitarian mix of acoustic and electronic sounds." -Bruce Lindsay, *All About Jazz*, 5 March 2013

"Transatlantic sax-bass-drums trio the **Kandinsky Effect** are adept at mixing creative jazz and electronics without the electronics getting in the way... if you stripped away the electronics, the sound would be uncluttered and even sparse. ... Walker and company vary the program considerably from track to track, sometimes giving the electronics a prominent role and other times using effects to color rather than dominate the music, and also applying treatments in a way that paints compositional changes in bold relief. Leadoff track "Johnny Utah" is one of the electronics-heavy numbers starting with Petrina's funky bassline and Dolister's crisp and insistent timekeeping drums beneath Walker's simple melody/riff, which gets some echoey treatment as the bass transitions into a deep electro throb... Ghostly washes of sound echo and float from Walker's sax through the backdrop of "M.C." as Petrina lays down a deep pulse and Dolister cleanly but powerfully drives the groove; Dolister...lets even subtle sonic colorations be fully heard... There are enough effects on "Left Over Shoes" to suggest a rocket to Planet Gong, while the following "Lobi Moby/Hotel 66," in a complete change of pace, finds Walker offering up some of his loveliest tenor playing, a gift to jazz rather than electronica fans, over straight bass-and-drums backing, sans effects... the biggest surprise of all might be the Ornette-ish "Lars Von Trier," another unadorned trio number whose unity of melody and free rhythm makes its own statement on artistic iconoclasm."

-Dave Lynch, *AllMusic*, 9 April 2013

"The three musicians have not abandoned jazz history, but their music has a definite 21st-century flavor: many tracks are hued by effects, electronics and digital processing; and compositions have a modern, sometimes non-linear shape, thus sharing sonic terrain similar to other electronica-coated outfits such as Kneebody. ... Film is tapped as one source of inspiration. Opener "Johnny Utah" refers to Keanu Reeves' FBI role in Kathryn Bigelow's 1991 action/cops and robbery picture, Point Break... Cinema of a different kind shapes "Lars Von Trier," titled after the

Danish director and screenwriter... **The Kandinsky Effect's international structure** can be heard in several ways. First, there is the mid-tempo yet rhythmically persistent "Brighton"... Petrina offers a steadfast bottom-end bass riff which would not be out of place on a Radiohead record... "Lobi Moby/Hotel 66" finds the trio in basic jazz mode, where conventional bass and drums back Walker's exquisite tenor. ... **The Kandinsky Effect is an accomplished band not because they implement electronics into jazz music, but rather for how they utilize electronic configurations to make their music radiate; and the manner in which they play their instruments** (and play around with the sounds their instruments create). There is a fine line in the merger of electronics with jazz... The Kandinsky Effect's approach (**letting the music breathe and not plugging in all of the empty spaces**) means they produce music which does not tire with focused and repetitive listening."

-Doug Simpson for *Audiophile Audition*, 28 April 2013

**"The Kandinsky Effect takes the classic saxophone-led jazz trio format to new places by using electronics... to create funky, modern music that still remains centered in improvisation...** The Kandinsky Effect's electric bass, synth drums and effects-laden saxophone create a full sound that's bigger than its three members. Gael Petrina's bass sounds as thick as the bass in a rock or pop/punk band. Saxophonist Warren Walker adds echo to his natural tone and sometimes sounds like a shredding guitar. Caleb Dolister's drums, mostly natural, are occasionally accented with electronica effects. Most impressive is the tastefulness of the accentuation. Electronica is not a schtick the trio relies on; rather, they employ it subtly and use it as artfully as their primary instruments... "

-Bill Dolan for *Burnside Writers Collective*, 26 March 2013

"A jazz-and-beyond trio of saxes, bass, and drums, The Kandinsky Effect manages to maximize and enhance their sound using a variety of methods, including studio ambience, electronics and effects. ...the rhythm section of Gael Petrina (bass & electronics) and drummer Kaleb Dollister are consistently tearing it up behind the one-man frontline of sax-man Warren Walker. This is one hard working trio... **they do understand the power of easing back and leaving some space within their grooves... and throughout it all... melody always reigns supreme...** five solid years... have fine-tuned their approach, **stretching out beyond the confines of jazz... electronics, funk grooves, bop, touches of punk, progressive rock, ambient and much more.** These are three dauntless explorers... determined to break new ground... all the while keeping their sound completely listenable and satisfying."

-Peter Thelan, *Exposé*, 24 October 2013

"Here is a refreshing new album of electronically-infused jazz worth your attention... **the album is performed spaciouly to give each tune the breathing room it needs to develop - and they are rhythmically creative, interesting tunes...** It's in this creative space that fantastic rhythmic developments take place which draw the listener in. "WK51" is a perfect example...the surrounding atmosphere and execution of Dolister's predominantly snare drum solo is similar to The Flashbulb's "Undiscovered Colors", the later belonging to an experimental sub-genre of Intelligent Dance Music. The group's electronic effects are, to me, merely an addition of color to the Wassily Kandinsky-like abstract sonic painting... Instead, **it is the phrasing forged from odd meters, colored in with harmonies, that make the music inspiring to listen to.** Those who enjoy exploring music shouldn't hesitate to pick up *Synesthesia*."

-Phillip Ballyk, *Expedition Audio*, 9 May 2013

**"The Kandinsky Effect is a post-modern jazz trio, searching for new ways to work within the jazz idiom by blending the borders of jazz, rock, electronica, hip-hop and experimental sounds...** The music on this album is clearly jazz, but dismissing it as JUST jazz does it a disservice. There are **strong and clear elements of electronica, dubstep, hip-hop, pop, rock and more** at play throughout.

The pattern repeats itself throughout the album – shifting sections with varying amounts of electronics and acoustic focus, plenty of improvisation and inventive melodic and harmonic elements. **The musicianship and communication throughout are stellar, there are free elements without being too far 'out', and the trio keeps the modern elements at the forefront without sacrificing the jazz foundation...** because these young musicians grew up with so many genres integrated, it all occurs naturally without feeling that they are creating a 'fusion' of anything.

'Quick Hit' Song: "Walking..." starting with a walking bass line that quickly takes on a stutter-step funk pattern, this song brings together all of the great elements heard throughout – heavy use of the bass for harmonic counterpoint to the sax, electronics doubling the acoustic instruments, and shifts between jazzy, rock-oriented, funk, and electronic elements...

**This is a great start to a new year of awesome music!** ...If you like jazz trios but are looking for something new and different from the standard piano trio, this is definitely worth a try. If you love different styles such as electronics, jazz, rock and hip-hop beats melded together in a fresh way, check this one out!"

-Michael Anderson, *Gear Diary*, 19 January 2013

**"Saxophone layers twist, caress and roar, intermixing with cunning provocative basslines and dynamically ecstatic and intricate drumming. The electronic shades are subtle and spacey... adding a ghostly, elusive yet powerful quality to the music, making it otherworldly.** The Kandinsky Effect's music is a rich and evocative celebration of color, texture and shape, much like the paintings of Wassily Kandinsky. **The Kandinsky Effect... breathes new life into electronic-influenced jazz.** These are young yet experienced and skillful guys with diverse musical tastes, and together they play bold intense music... **It's not just the electronic treatments they use that make their music glow, it's also the way they play their instruments, the way they merge the abstraction of electronic music with the free spirit of jazz.**

*Synesthesia* is not just a blend of jazz and electronic shades, the album slides beyond and brushes with rock, hazy dub-infused scents and more...

***Synesthesia* is a mind-bending, eclectic and challenging sonic stream... An ambitious album that will appeal to fans of Aphex Twin and Boards of Canada, but also to fans of Squarepusher's older work and of course to jazz aficionados who seek to explore new and exciting sonic territories."**

-*Igloo Magazine*, 16 February 2013

**"Fans of the Leeds school bands Trio VD and Roller Trio should find this transatlantic trio worth checking out.** They might not have quite that punk edge of the English bands, but **they mine a similar seam, where rock and grunge meet jazz.**

...a saxophone trio, but with Walker using a lot of echo and other effects, and Petrina often playing chords on his electric bass, plus some full on rock and reggae drumming from Dolister, the Sonny Rollins Trio this definitely ain't.

The band favour simple but strong riffy tunes, and although the rhythms are often tricky ones they work hard to smooth them out.... And...just when you feel you have the measure of their...go for the burn rock propulsion, they suddenly come up with a pretty tune like *Cusba*, with Walker turning almost lyrical... *Brighton*...feels like a song an indy-Americana band should be doing? Except in place of a sweet-toned vocal there is a saxophone, while the strummed guitar is in fact a bass. The drums are brush-driven. It's a treat."

-Peter Bacon, *the Jazz Breakfast [UK]*, 11 March 2013

“Walker’s use of effects on his sax means that, rather than just playing the head and solo, he’s able to comp and add chords to support his band mates... **he certainly does bring something new to the sax as a melodic lead. The idea at the heart of many of the tracks on this album is a readiness to take a rhythmic theme or motif and make the most of it, using metre changes and fluid comping...**

Some tracks are angular and challenging; others, like *Cusba*, have a more conventional form, and ease off on the effects... the album as a whole? **It’s sparky, full of brio, a bit weird, harmonically challenging with a textural warmth.** I liked the readiness to combine fierce grooves and electronic tones to push a melody to its limits. In the mould of groups like The Roller Trio, The Kandinsky Effect demonstrate a willingness to transcend the limitations of the trio format.”  
-Rob Mallows, *London Jazz News*, 7 February 2014

“... **a colorful, melodically memorable and huge body of texture behind the trio. The compositions are twisted and beautiful, aligning visionaries of their respective instruments...** Gaël Petrina is a technically phenomenal acoustic and electric bassist...who brings a very healthy sense of identity to the low end of *Synesthesia*. His melodic approach covers a large spectrum of the bass, adding in multiple layers of depth to the recording and finding pockets inside of the rhythm most bassist...are incapable of reaching. You can feel his weight and presence every second... New York based drummer Caleb Dolister... has an answer... to every style of energy the bass and sax presents and leaves the perfect amount of space... It’s...always mind blowing... Saxophonist Warren Walker is...the glue of the band sonically... ***Synesthesia*... stretches the idiom of what is jazz and blasts the notion of that answer far into the future...** The songs that really leave me in awe are those in which the tonal identity is morphed into a deep world and the dynamics of the piece takes flight... A perfect example...is the song “Walking”...the bass morphs from added effects that give it a jazz funk and electronic muscular sound. It’s one of the most incredible bass lines I have ever heard... .. contemplation takes its turn in many of the songs...showing how much dynamics the trio has into more restricted areas of energy while retaining an abundance of color and presence. Pieces like “Cusba”, “WK51□” and “Lars Von Trier” all have some of the most subtle and minimal sections of sound... Another revelatory experience was provided when the progressive rock experimentation of the album takes a reprisal in the ending track “If Only”. With the most menacing atmosphere on the album and a heated approach on all accounts, it’s a burning end to a courageous type of art... ***Synesthesia* is one hell of a ride that shows the strength and innovations left in jazz music and all the new styles of music created in the 21st century.**”  
-Erik Otis, *Sound Color Vibration*, 5 March 2013

“With plenty of reverb and echo sloshing the saxophone all over the place, a tight snare drum sound from Caleb Dolister that rocks the house, busy bass lines by Gaël Petrina, and a suave electronic aura, *Johnny Utah* is designed to appeal to your feet as well as your mind... *Cusba*, also by Walker, is a hushed and airy ballad focusing on his sinuous saxophone, with subtle electronic effects... Drummer Dolister’s dub-wise *Left Over Shoes* makes good use of the band’s many electronic effects for atmosphere, and Walker stretches out to good effect... *Mexican Gift Shop* is thrashy and rude, a kind of dynamic game with sections of throbbing bass and beating drums alternating... In the end, it was the industrial-strength rhythm stylings of potent bassist Petrina and hard-grooving drummer Dolister that really held my interest on *Synesthesia*.”  
-Stuart Kremsky, *Mr. Stu’s Record Room*, July 2014

“***Synesthesia* is a fun, quirky slice of avant-garde jazz...** gives the impression of a much larger ensemble... though Walker’s sax is often the main focus of these songs, it’s Dolister’s deft, intricate drumming that generally steals the show...and Petrina’s rumbling bass grooves... While the use of electronics on some songs add an avant-garde flair, a good majority of what you’ll hear... is actually **very solid, smoky jazz**, as is the case on the alluring “Lars Von Trier”, with Walker’s boozy sax explorations pushing all the right buttons.” -Pete Pardo, *Sea of Tranquility*, 29 September 2013

“Short, punchy tracks, jazzy at their core, with a certain filiation with Rob Mazurek’s smaller groups. In the vein of avant-jazz crossed with avant-prog that Cuneiform has been digging for a few years (Led Bib, in particular).”  
-François Couture, *monsieur délire*, 2 July 2014

## THE KANDINSKY EFFECT

THE KANDINSKY EFFECT SNP RECORDS

2010

“**What do you get when you combine an American saxophonist, a self-proclaimed "total gringo" bassist and a French drummer, playing progressive jazz in Europe? There’s no one-size-fits-all answer. But The Kandinsky Effect**, composed of Warren Walker (saxophone), Gael Petrina (acoustic and electric bass) and Gautier Garrigue (drums), **sure as heck blow the roof off the joint trying to figure it out for themselves.** The group’s self-titled release finds it turning a number of seeming roadblocks into advantages, creating an organic, forward-thinking record. First and foremost, despite (or maybe because of) their disparate backgrounds, all three musicians are on the same page, and their communication on this record borders on the telepathic. ... Then there is the instrumentation. ... it’s the variations on the traditional trio that make this album one that listeners will return to time and again. Walker’s use of effects, both through his saxophone and otherwise, is new and different but always tasteful, while Petrina’s electric bass proves quite refreshing. ... The group...lets the compositions speak for themselves. Finally, there is the place. All three musicians are based in Paris... The location, however, proves liberating. There is no pressure on the group to conform to blues-based, American jazz expectations. ... Walker, Petrina and Garrigue will continue to be heard from as they develop their individual and collective sounds.”  
-David Miller, *All About Jazz*, January 30, 2010

## LIVE PERFORMANCES

“**Kandinsky Effect...bracing, electronically tweaked jazz...**” – Chris Barton, “Culture Monster Blog, *Los Angeles Times*, October 2, 2011

“Busy but subtle, drummer Caleb Dollister was the star of the Euro-jazz trio The Kandinsky Effect...While saxist Warren Walker jaked his knees behind simple lines, and electric bassist Gael Petrina plucked a driving groove, the real improv was going on kitside via Dollister’s lighthanded sticks. ...tangy touches of electronic FX -- **an easy group to like in a festival setting.**”

– Greg Burke, “Live reviews: Precious moments from Angel City Jazz Fest 2011, Sept. 24-Oct. 2,” *Metal Jazz*, Oct. 6, 2011