



Claude Diallo Situation · Quintet

Piano, bass, drums, trumpet and saxophone

LONG BIOGRAPHY

Claude Diallo, piano

Luques Curtis, bass

Andy Bauer, drums

Igmar Thomas, trumpet

Godwin Louis, saxophone

THE QUINTET

Claude Diallo Situation Expands to a Quintet: A Berklee College of Music Friendship Reunited!

The journey continues: Traveling with Music. With this special quintet, Swiss pianist and composer Claude Diallo continues a musical story that began more than 20 years ago at Berklee College of Music in Boston. Together with Grammy Award-winning bassist Luques Curtis, drummer and producer Andy Bauer, trumpeter Igmar Thomas, and saxophonist Godwin Louis, Diallo brings together five outstanding musicians who share not only a common musical history, but who have also developed remarkable individual and international careers over the years.

What makes this project particularly special is precisely this combination of long-standing friendship, a shared musical background, and decades of personal and artistic development. Between 2004 and 2006, the musicians met while studying at Berklee College of Music. Even back then, the idea emerged of one day bringing a project of their own to the stage and into the studio. None of them could have imagined that it would take almost 20 years for that vision to become reality.

Following the release of the album *I Found a New Home* on Dot Time Records, Claude Diallo returned to Tedesco Studios in New Jersey together with Luques Curtis and Andy Bauer. For the new production, the trio was expanded by two exceptional horn players: trumpeter Igmar Thomas and saxophonist Godwin Louis. Together, the five musicians form an ensemble deeply rooted in modern jazz while embracing influences from jazz, Latin, world music, and other musical traditions.

For this special reunion, Diallo composed new pieces and revisited earlier works from his repertoire. Original compositions by Luques Curtis and Andy Bauer were also included in the recording. The result is music shaped both by the individual stories of the musicians and by their shared history.

CLAUDE DIALLO – PIANO & COMPOSITION

For more than 30 years, Claude Diallo has been connecting people through music. As a Swiss jazz pianist, composer, and bandleader, he stands for a modern and open approach to jazz that tells stories. His music combines virtuosity with emotional depth, improvisation with composition, and reflects the diversity of his international career.

With his ensemble Claude Diallo Situation, Claude Diallo has developed a contemporary jazz sound driven by spontaneous interaction, melodic clarity, and expressive storytelling. His compositions invite audiences on musical journeys while creating spaces for encounter, inspiration, and shared experiences.

An important milestone in his career was his recognition at the Montreux Jazz Festival Bösendorfer Solo Piano Competition, which brought him international attention at an early stage as an exceptional pianist. Today, Claude Diallo is a recording artist with the American label Dot Time Records as well as an official Yamaha Artist.

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LUQUES CURTIS – BASS

Luques Curtis is regarded as one of the distinguished bassists of his generation, moving effortlessly between modern jazz and Afro-Caribbean musical traditions. Raised in Hartford, Connecticut, he studied at Berklee College of Music in Boston.

Already during his time in Boston, Curtis performed with musicians such as Gary Burton, Ralph Peterson, Donald Harrison, Christian Scott, and Francisco Mela. Since then, he has worked with numerous internationally acclaimed artists, including Eddie Palmieri, Gary Burton, Sean Jones, Christian Scott, Stefon Harris, Orrin Evans, and many others.

Curtis is also a member of the Curtis Brothers, together with his brother Zaccai Curtis, and is active as a composer and producer. His discography includes more than 100 commercial recordings. In 2025, he received a Grammy Award for Best Latin Jazz Album in connection with *Cubop Lives*; he has also contributed to numerous Grammy Award-winning and Grammy-nominated productions.

His musical approach combines rhythmic precision, tremendous stylistic openness, and an exceptional ability to give space to the musicians around him. In his collaboration with Diallo, Bauer, Thomas, and Louis, his bass playing forms one of the essential foundations of the quintet.

ANDY BAUER – DRUMS & PRODUCTION

New York-based Andy Bauer works internationally as a drummer, producer, and composer. His musical identity is shaped by a connection between different generations and styles. Growing up with jazz, Bauer developed an early openness toward a wide range of musical worlds and today works as comfortably with soul, indie, and pop artists as he does within jazz.

As a drummer, Bauer combines energy and explosiveness with great sensitivity. His playing moves between the tradition of jazz and a contemporary, stylistically open aesthetic. As a producer and composer, he expands this approach through a strong focus on sound, musical dramaturgy, and the connection between different forms of musical expression.

Within the Claude Diallo Situation Quintet, Bauer is much more than a rhythmic accompanist. His experience as both musician and producer plays a major role in bringing the different personalities of the ensemble together and in shaping the dynamic and contemporary sound of the music.

IGMAR THOMAS – TRUMPET

Trumpeter, composer, and arranger Igmarr Thomas belongs to a generation of musicians who naturally connect the traditions of jazz with hip-hop, R&B, and contemporary music. Raised in San Diego, Thomas began playing trumpet at the age of eleven. Already during his youth, he became part of California's vibrant music scene and came into contact with artists such as Thundercat, Kamasi Washington, and Terrace Martin.

A decisive encounter in his early career was his collaboration with legendary bandleader and vibraphonist Lionel Hampton, who awarded Thomas a scholarship to the Lionel Hampton School of Music and gave him the opportunity to perform in his big band. Thomas later received another full scholarship to attend Berklee College of Music before moving to New York.



Since then, Thomas has worked with artists from a wide range of musical worlds, including John Legend, Lauryn Hill, Common, J. Cole, The Roots, Shawn Mendes, Patti LaBelle, Yasiin Bey, Terri Lyne Carrington, the Tedeschi Trucks Band, and the Roy Hargrove Big Band. At the same time, he has established himself as a sought-after composer and arranger. His work has been presented by institutions including Carnegie Hall and the National Youth Orchestra of the USA / NYO Jazz; his composition RPM's was premiered by NYO Jazz in 2021.

His artistic approach reflects a conscious balance between respect for tradition and the courage to continually redefine musical boundaries. This openness makes him an ideal partner for the quintet.

GODWIN LOUIS – ALTO SAXOPHONE

Born in Harlem and raised between Bridgeport, Connecticut, and Port-au-Prince, Haiti, saxophonist Godwin Louis brings together different cultural and musical worlds in his music. His Haitian heritage and American education form an important part of his artistic identity. He began playing saxophone at the age of nine.

Louis studied at Berklee College of Music as well as at the prestigious Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz Performance. He was a finalist and award recipient at the Thelonious Monk International Jazz Saxophone Competition and has worked throughout his career with outstanding figures in jazz and the international music scene, including Herbie Hancock, Wynton Marsalis, Clark Terry, Ron Carter, Al Foster, Mulatu Astatke, Mahmoud Ahmed, and the New York Philharmonic Orchestra. Outside the jazz world, he has also been associated with artists such as Prince, Patti LaBelle, Toni Braxton, Babyface, and Madonna.

As a composer and arranger, Louis received, among other distinctions, a Grammy nomination for his work on Cécile McLorin Salvant's album *Mélusine*. His musical range extends from jazz and gospel to classical music, Afro-Caribbean traditions, and global music. He is also deeply committed to education and cultural exchange. He is the founder of Experience Ayiti, a nonprofit organization dedicated to musical and cultural education in Haiti, and teaches at Berklee College of Music.

Within the quintet, Louis contributes not only a distinctive and expressive saxophone sound, but also a deep sensitivity to cultural connections and musical communication.

THE SPECIAL CHEMISTRY OF THE QUINTET

What sets this formation apart from a traditional all-star lineup is its shared history. These five musicians did not simply meet for the first time for their current collaboration. They first encountered one another as young artists at Berklee College of Music, shared a formative period of study, and then went on to pursue their own individual paths.

Over the following years, they developed individual careers on stages and in studios across North America, Europe, Asia, and beyond. What began as the vision of a young Claude Diallo eventually became a reunion of five mature artists, each bringing a wealth of experience into a shared musical project.

The quintet's music therefore thrives on a unique balance of familiarity and freedom. Their long history creates an intuitive musical understanding, while the different influences and experiences of the five musicians leave ample room for surprise, spontaneous interaction, and improvisation. Energy, joy, and virtuosity are never ends in themselves; they emerge naturally from attentive listening and the pleasure of making music together.



DOT TIME RECORDS

The trio's first album, *I Found a New Home*, was released by Dot Time Records, an international independent label specializing in jazz. Founded in 2012, the label works with both established artists and emerging talents from around the world. Dot Time Records describes its philosophy as a partnership in which the success of the label is directly connected to the success of its artists.

The label has a presence in New York and Ireland and positions itself as a modern, international network that places creativity, artistic independence, and long-term collaboration with its artists at the center of its work.

For Claude Diallo, the collaboration with Dot Time Records therefore holds particular significance. *I Found a New Home*—already in its title an allusion to personal, geographical, and musical home—marked an important step in the history of Claude Diallo Situation. The album was recorded with Luques Curtis and Andy Bauer, with whom Diallo has shared a musical connection for many years.

With the new quintet, this story now continues: *Traveling with Music* represents the journey of five musicians who met more than two decades ago, followed different paths, and have now come back together with a shared musical language. Their music combines the energy of contemporary jazz with the depth of a long-standing friendship—turning a long-held dream into a living musical reality.

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