

DDK interviewed by Stéphane Vuilleumier



DDK - Jacques Demierre (JD), Axel Dörner (AD), Jonas Kocher (JK) - came into being in 2014 following a carte blanche offer from the Mulhouse Météo festival, directed at the time by Fabien Simon. Jacques invited Axel and Jonas to join him to play in trio at the festival. They continued to play concerts regularly as a trio since then.

*In July 2023, DDK approached Stéphane Vuilleumier (SV), a follower of their different projects, with the idea of an interview in line with the idea of the upcoming album *A Right to Silence*, recorded by Benjamin Maumus at Théâtre Le Colombier, Les Cabannes, France, June 21-25, 2021 on the occasion of a recording residency at GMEA-Centre National de Création Musicale d'Albi-Tarn. As also described and discussed by Thibault Walter in his liner notes to the album, the three musicians decided to apply the principle of non-influence in each other's choice that they had been practising for years as DDK in choosing the music to be released, each coming up with their own CD from the same raw recordings.*

After listening to the 3 CDs, SV prepared a list of questions that he emailed DDK in August 2023. The musicians answered independently per email in the following months, with a few later additions.

The same approach as for presenting the recorded material on CD was chosen to assemble the interview, emulating, in a way, the process used in making A Right to Silence: SV worked on the raw interview by reorganising the order of questions and answers and leaving out some material.

The 3CD album *A Right to Silence* was released by Ftarri/Meenna on September 15 2023. <https://meenna.bandcamp.com/album/a-right-to-silence>

The Art of the Trio

The three of you are regularly involved in small group projects. What's particular to a trio?

AD A trio is a special number of musicians since it is the smallest formation which allows multiple references, so it has a simplicity compared to larger numbers of musicians playing together, but it's also already very complex in the references musicians can generate between each other. Particular in this one is the instrumentation and the musical personalities.

JD The trio is a special formula, particularly well-balanced, it easily allows for contradiction, the simultaneous bringing into play of antagonistic elements, to play solo is more complicated, in duo confrontation is immediate, in trio there are an infinite number of possibilities for considering what is being played, we play more with a context than with individuals, the context is more powerful than its components taken separately.

Initially, what was particularly interesting to you with this trio?

JD An intuition that these three musicians were going to find an original way of sounding together, a way of sharing the improvised moment, the intuition behind this "casting" was musical, this trio was going to sound in a special way, before the slightest sound was ever played together, DDK was already sounding great.

AD I think it's two aspects, one is the instrumentation: it's three instruments in total, but two instruments with a keyboard, two instruments generating sound with air. The accordion is as an instrument between the piano and the trumpet which gives the music of the trio a very specific sound appearance. The other is the combination of the unique personal styles of the three musicians.

And in hindsight?

JD I believe that DDK's ability to create sound from listening, its great freedom to play, to play individually and collectively, its relationship with acoustic space and its use in situ, all this is very special and unique.

AD After some time each ensemble is developing a certain way of establishing specific rules of improvisation or real time composition, with this trio this is also the case but it is interesting and special how we manage to recombine these rules and create something new out of it and then in this way manage to change the rules little by little.

JK After almost 10 years of concerts together, there's something about this trio that's still there as it was at the first concert in Mulhouse in 2014. Nothing has changed, it's the same feeling every time we get together on stage. And at the same time, with each concert, the music can go elsewhere. It seems to me that it has acquired more depth and density with time, but without really changing. This thing that's been

there from the start - apart from the instruments - is undoubtedly our three personal ways of listening which, superimposed on each other, give the trio its own special character, and thus form the group's unique listening to each other. With the DDK Trio, I feel that each concert is the continuity of the previous one, even if there are months between them. And the way our three presences share the space, with our bodies, listening and sounds is very unique for me. It creates again and again this very special atmosphere and tension between the known and the unknown between us. We play always the same. And it is always different.

One of the principles of your work as DDK is not to influence each other's choices. How do you define the difference between "influence" and "interaction" in the context of DDK?

JK For me, non-influence has to do with the fact that we never try to push the music in one direction or another or influence it through verbal exchanges before or after the concert. On the other hand, interactions during the concert take place at many levels and all the time, which, of course, influences our individual decisions at any given time.

AD To "influence" someone is for me a kind of an interaction where someone tries to change the behaviour of the other person, whereas an "interaction" I consider less hierarchical and more multidirectional. Additionally "interaction" is more connected to time and always happening in a defined time frame whereas "influence" can be outside of a defined time frame.

JD For me, an influence is more a kind of flow in time and space, a movement that starts from one point and moves towards another, or that extends 360 degrees, it's an action in motion that doesn't imply reciprocity, whereas an interaction would involve more of an "obligation" to interact, in the case of DDK, not influencing the other's choice means leaving him a total freedom of choice, by accepting that choice and by renouncing our own influence, we open up a much wider playing field than the one created by our personal influence alone.

Many of your small group recordings are rather of a "one off" type. As DDK, in contrast, you have toured and you continue to do so, and before this 3CD you documented your work in DDK with (some would say only) two records [1 LP and 1 CD]. What surprised you most about the development of your performances as a trio?

JD I try not to be surprised or pleased or disappointed or anything else by our work as a trio, I'm more focused on its ability to be totally linked to the present moment, I try in a way not to have a point of view on the trio's music. I think about it without thinking about it, having a point of view on its development would already be freezing it in its development, or else I try to completely dissociate the fact of playing in a trio, of producing sound together, and the fact of talking about it, of thinking about it. For me these are two practices that don't influence each other directly (but certainly indirectly, which seems more interesting to me, i.e. without going through an exclusively personal decision).

AD It is great to experience how the trio maintains to keep ourselves being surprised in our performances despite our own musical clichés which developed over the years.

What do you think is important or useful to document for this trio, and in terms of making recordings available?

JD I try to place the question of documenting our work in a perspective that is neither that of the concert experience nor of post-concert analysis. I think that the box set *A Right To Silence* is an interesting way of looking at this question, because it focuses on the capacity of listening to produce sound, it stages the interplay of our listening and the multiplication of this interplay through phonographic production, it allows us to see and hear a real process of sound diffraction, as Thibault Walter writes in his liner notes, producing a CD should go beyond the simple framework of archiving (even if this is sometimes just as useful), especially if we are working on the relationship between sound and the space in which it propagates, it's the choice of medium and the choice of how it is unfolded that will best convey the sound issues and their societal resonances.

AD I think it's very useful to record performances of ourselves and listen to them, but additionally it's interesting to put the trio in a different context. Usually this is the room where we perform each concert, each room becomes part of our instruments and influences the way we play. This can be only partly kept on a recording, better would be to be at the performance live. For that reason we three musicians have witnessed all our concerts in the large number of different rooms (and also different pianos Jacques was playing on), so the memory of changing the contexts in this way is present in our music.

Recordedness versus liveness

From the "Recordedness" homepage: "...to attempt to make a record that exploits its 'recordedness', like a concert exploits its liveness". How does this manifesto relate to your work, for yourself and as DDK?

AD A recording is always something different than a concert, in this sense I usually treat a recording differently, find out about the possibilities which are only possible in a recording and recompose (already mixing a recording could be considered as recomposition, editing the music is going further in this direction) the recorded music considering all the different options. This is reflected also in our trio recordings and releases.

JD What is listened to in general is not only the fruit of the listener, but is determined by many factors, the space where the sound is propagated, the quality of the built environment, its social inscription, the psychophysiological possibilities of human hearing, etc., if confronting sound documentation through the act of recording is always, face to face with reality, to put listening to the test, working on 'recordedness' can be seen as just another (very exciting) way of implementing the potential of in situ listening.

JK I believe that every recording needs to be adapted to the situation of listening at home, which is different from the concert situation. I always try to put myself in the listener's situation when I choose or edit music for the record. It's rare that I publish a 1:1 recording from a concert. When adapting music for the record, I take into account the sound result and the position of the listener as another context different from that of the concert or the recording session. The process of improvisation that may have taken place no longer necessarily interests me, it's the musical result that counts.

In terms of liveness: Do you have recurring moments, rituals, in your DDK performances (concerts, or as in this case residencies) - before, during, after them?

AD Yes, for sure there are recurring patterns in our behaviour before, during and after the concert, I'm not sure if we are always aware of them. A concert never stands on its own, it is also a social event which connects the audience and us, it is something which goes back in the history of human beings as social animals as part of nature.

JK Before each set, we define a framework duration, which can be 45, 47, 52 minutes, etc. It's a ritual that we also followed during the *A Right to Silence* recording residency. In this case, the chosen durations were shorter: 3, 5, 7, 11 minutes, etc.

JD Apart from finding a good restaurant before the concert, or tasting a selection of natural wines from the area every evening (as we did during the residency at the GMEA), the only real ritual we have is that of determining the time frame of our performance, of giving ourselves a time frame according to the venue, the atmosphere, the general and particular context, the duration of this frame resulting from a coincidence of information that is both objective and completely subjective.

What are the key elements of a successful performance of DDK?

JD During a DDK tour, it's the collective timing of the day that determines the quality of the concert, with each moment merely preparing the next - in a series of causes and effects - there's no real break between what precedes the concert, what makes up the concert, and what follows the concert.

JK An energy that flows freely between us, in tune with the place and the time, and a total openness to whatever may come.

AD Successful can be defined in many different ways, for me it's a successful performance when all of us in the trio liked the concert.

In your improvised music, what difference do you make between residency performance (as in this case) and concert performance?

JD The main difference in residency is perhaps the absence of an audience, but generally speaking, each performance is different, whether in residency or live, difference is part of the very idea of performance, each performance is contextual, in situ, you could even say that the difference between one performance and another is one of the basic materials of the following performance.

AD In a residency we have usually a lot of time to reflect on our musical work. The residency performance is directly connected to the work we did in the residency and also to the rooms where we played in the residency. A concert performance is usually each time in a new room and connected to travelling to the place where the concert is happening. All these factors have an influence on the music being played.

In terms of recordedness: In an improvised music recorded document, what is "recordedness" for you?

JK It is the only way of documenting our music, the score and the music are one. But a great concert might not be that interesting as a listening experience at home. A recording of improvised music has to be more than just a document, it has to work as recording, as a new situation.

AD I think an improvised music recorded document is a piece of music you can listen to again as many times as you want. In this sense it has a fundamental difference to a performance of improvised music. "Recordedness" raises many questions in a recorded document like this, for example: how was it recorded? where were the microphones placed? how was the recording treated afterwards? on which kind of sound system is the listener listening to it? in which way is the listener creating the music each time new when the listener is listening to it?

JD If we think that listening takes precedence over sound production, then there's no difference between a recorded document of improvised music and a recorded document of non-improvised music, with each recording there's a kind of translation of the sound space, a transcription of human listening into microphonic listening, I see it as a real process of translation, with the positive point that the improvised moment acquires a kind of thickness, like a text whose multiple translations end up accompanying it and agglomerating into a kind of "global" text in constant transformation.

How do you usually go about documenting your performances? Do you keep recordings of everything you do?

AD I record from time to time performances of myself, there are times I record almost every concert, then there are times when I don't record for a while. It is a different kind of playing a performance when you have microphones in front of you or not. In our times it's more and more difficult to play a concert which is not recorded or filmed.

JD I'm not a big fan of archiving, I don't record everything I do, generally speaking, I tend to limit my publications, ideally archiving as such should also be approached in a performative mode (a Canadian choreographer, Manon Hotte, who lives in Geneva, has done some fine work around this performative aspect of the archive).

How much room for manoeuvre do you have when preparing a recording of a performance for publication?

AD I would think there are endless possibilities, but it has to have a meaning for me. In this way it's limited by the choices I have to take which are always following my own taste.

JD It depends on the publication context, archives, conceptual project, internet release, object disc, etc.

Do you tinker with the raw material of the recording? What for? And how do you go about achieving this?

AD I would rather say it's a way of recomposing, sometimes I try something with the raw material (listen to it with different settings of parameters, or editing a passage), listen to it and then make a decision if it works or not.

JD It depends on the project, but I like the material for publication to be different from the live material, I recently made a solo record, the Hills Shout (released by wide ear records), where the editing process, the composition in fact, was to work on the raw material (an improvised concert recorded live), without adding any sound elements other than those already present in the initial recording, in the case of the DDK box set *A Right to Silence*, the basic instructions for the editing were to choose each piece as a whole, without

editing its content, without cutting or adding anything, and to play with the final order of the pieces on the CD, freely adding or removing bits of silence.

Can a publication of improvised music exploit the raw recording in a similar way that an improvised performance (in concert or, as in this case, during a residency) exploits the moment in which it takes place?

JD Working on recorded raw material is always different from the initial improvised performance in that the material has already been extracted from the temporal sequence that made it up, the relationship to time, to the moment, is very different according to one approach or the other, to record is to write, to write on a medium, which has its own relationship to time in terms of its inscription and which above all allows us to look back on ourselves, of course we could also imagine an improvised recording, but to listen to it once recorded (if we want to remain within a totally improvised approach) would have to be forbidden, because it would already mean working on the material, a kind of interpretation of what was recorded.

AD In the process of making a publication you can always change your mind until it's published (in this sense it's a kind of recomposition), but in an improvised performance it's too late when you start considering changing any decision afterwards, even when you plan something it's already too late for actually realizing it, since everything is changing constantly in present time.

What interest do you have in publishing recordings today?

AD Publishing a recording is a different way of communicating with the audience. It also makes it possible to listen to my music when I'm not personally present. I also get feedback to my recordings which leads me to new ideas.

JK It's a very important documentation of my work. Each recording marks a particular stage or aspect of my music. Unlike written music, there is no trace on paper, only a sound trace that will be representative of a certain music at a given moment.

JD I don't think the relationship with the object, with the sound medium has completely disappeared, perhaps it will disappear one day, but for the moment there is still a potentially creative tension between a sound and its medium.

What about the physical medium, in the age of Bandcamp and dematerialised publishing?

JK I often ask myself the question.... Being from a generation that grew up with different media, I always have connection to the object. I find that putting a record on the turntable or in the CD player changes the relationship I have with the music I'm going to listen to, with the person who gave me the record or with the purchase I decided to make.

AD A physical medium can create a different relation to a published recording, it's an object which can be seen as a piece of art you can hold in your hands.

JD The interest is in having the possibility, in a given space, of making sound resonate with the visual, the image, the text, the typography, etc., of creating an environment where different ways of perceiving reality coexist.

What makes you want to share a recording, in whatever form?

JD As listening to recorded documents is nowadays problematic because of the fragmentation of listening conditions, it seems interesting to me to propose a special, broader, quasi-performative experience of listening, depending on the medium used and its deployment.

AD If I really like a recording I would like also others to listen to it, it's a way to communicate with somebody else.

Making A *Right to Silence*

How did you come up with the idea of a triple CD?

JD It was on the way back from the residency, in the car, Jonas and I driving towards Switzerland, that the idea came up, I think that the situation where two people are sitting side by side and looking straight ahead while talking is one of the best conversational situations, both in terms of intimacy and creativity. It wasn't the quality of the material, but rather the quantity of it that was decisive, we had to draw positive conclusions from it, just as everything that is played in the context of an improvisation is in some way creatively turned into something positive.

JK The idea came from Jacques and I on our way back home from the residency. We were wondering what to do with all the rushes from the recording. And above all how to find a consensus on the choice of pieces. So basically it was a very pragmatic decision. The conceptualisation came later.

AD It was an idea of Jacques and Jonas they had when they were traveling in the car together back home from the residency talking about the recordings we made in the residency. They asked me what I would think about it, I replied that I thought it was a very good idea. So we found a way to achieve it.

What changes did you make to the raw recording?

JD We decided not to change anything in the content of the pieces we had chosen, the choice of a piece implied total acceptance of its sound content, just as each of us totally accepts the sound proposals of the other two at the time of the concert.

AD The raw recording was mixed by Benjamin Maumus (he also recorded us), first a raw mix, then we made our choices, after this he mixed the chosen pieces. The mixing of a recording is also a special change to it and an expression of a point of view on the music, in this case this was equally independent from all three of us.

How was work on this project similar to or different from your previous projects?

JK The common point with our live music is the choice of pre-defined durations before each take. The major difference was the absence of an audience and the choice of shorter durations.

JD It was very different in terms of the amount of material recorded, we knew it was going to be too much, and it was, indeed, without knowing it this overflow was going to push us towards a 3 CD release.

AD It has been quite different since each of the three musicians of the ensemble makes a selection and order of the pieces on his own and there will be three different versions of the CD. Usually it's a different

process where the musicians have to find a common agreement about how the CD will be and there will be only one version of the CD.

Still, in performance you often play long, sustained sounds as a solo voice. The atmosphere is often meditative, always concentrated. So I was guessing that you wished to make this an important element of the album?

JD There was no preconceived intention as to the sound purpose of this publication.

AD In the raw recording and in the performances we came to a way of choosing something to play which is in one way independent and not influenced by the other two, on the other hand it is always influenced by what the others are choosing since we are in the same room and are playing at the same time. It is a way of playing music where our behaviour is independent and not independent at the same time. It might seem not to be influenced, but it is very much influenced.

In relation to this concept that each of you should not influence the choices of the other two members of the trio: How did you set up the work so that it extends your concept to the published release?

AD We were choosing our individual selection without knowing what the others would choose, since we all live in different cities and don't meet every day it was very easy not to be influenced by the others. Each of us made a selection of pieces, an order of the selected pieces and decisions about silences in between the pieces. Then after this Jacques was working on the mastering and could listen to the three versions, Jonas and myself were then listening to the three different master CDs before we were sending it to the pressing.

JK We applied the same principle of non-influence in the other musicians' choices. And in this particular case, the freedom to choose the takes and the dramaturgy of the CD. The only decisions, i.e. a general duration of around 45 minutes and the renunciation to any kind of editing between or within takes, were taken by consensus.

JD Everything came from listening, nothing was premeditated, we first played/listened, building our improvisations piece by piece, without any desire to end up with a triple CD, the act of listening built our music, as always, it built all the pieces, both those selected for publication and those that were not, it was only later, on the spot, while listening to some of the recorded pieces, that the question arose of how to listen to so much sound material, this question of how to manage listening then gave rise to a proposal in which the thematisation of listening is at the centre of the project, and Thibault Walter then pushed it even further, in his own words as a sound theorist.

Any further plans, choices - or surprises! - in preparing your music for CD?

JK The plan went as we decided, the outcome was a surprise for all of us.

JD Nothing was planned in terms of the final object, which took shape as we listened and played, so there were no unpleasant surprises... We had no particular wishes or objectives as to the form the project was going to take, or if we did, it was precisely not to have any.

AD From my point of view everything went as planned. It was interesting to see how different the three versions of the same recording session were, but also see the similarities. My hope was to have three different versions of the same which I can see fulfilled, it is quite a difference in which context of other pieces one and the same piece sounds like.

Did this independent work on the CD change your perception of the specific residency performance that was recorded, and your memory of it?

JD It didn't fundamentally change my perception of the recording residency, but it did emphasise the specificity of each of our own way of listening, I felt even more independent of Axel and Jonas, and at the same time I felt even more intensely the community of our shared ways of listening.

AD In the process of the recording of acoustic music the musicians always hear the acoustic music from their point of view and their position in the room during the recording. This will influence also the memory of the recording and the memory of how it sounded. Then when we were listening back to it being in the process of choosing the different pieces we listen to the sound which was recorded through the microphones which is quite a different perspective. In this way of listening over and over my perception of how I remember the recording changed, the sound of the recording replaces more and more slowly and unnoticeably my memory of the acoustic sound of the recording session in the room.

Did you choose the titles of the pieces on the basis of the recording or did they exist beforehand?

JK The piece titles were defined by Jacques, who took them from Thibault Walter's text. This text increasingly took its own place in the project, becoming - in my view - almost the central element around which the music is structured.

AD Jacques chose the titles for the pieces and we agreed to his choice.

JD all the titles come from Thibault Walter's text, I wanted there to be a back-and-forth between the text and our sounds, Thibault drew inspiration from our sounds for his text, I drew inspiration from his text to create the titles of the different pieces, but as the titles came at the end of the process, the choices were made from the pieces that did not yet have titles.

Can you give an example of how a piece title came up?

JD Simply by subjectively extracting fragments of texts that I felt could be used as titles, and then assigning titles to the various pieces was done quite intuitively.

AD In this case Jacques was coming up with the titles. When I find a title I see it like poetry in relation to the piece of music. It doesn't mean that there is a direct relation between the piece and the title.

The title *A Right to Silence* may represent something like a manifesto. Can you elaborate a little on what this title means to you?

JK This right to silence is a fundamental element in our music. It can occur at any moment at any time during the collective performance. Silence is an element that returns again and again - and sometimes quite abruptly. This will open up a new dimension every time, and challenge and call into question what

has just happened or also what did not happen as we might have expected. Of course this right to silence can also be read in a different, more political way, which also suits me well.

JD All the titles are like objets trouvés, objects that I found in Thibault Walter's text, the title *A Right to Silence* was self-evident, it appeared by chance in each of the three choices, there was a happy coincidence between its triple appearance and our sound orientation, it sounds like a manifesto, but it isn't one.

AD *A Right to Silence* can mean many different things and trigger many associations. I think it could be for example seen as something needed in many situations nowadays when you are in a public space, restaurant or bar and there is music coming from speakers covering the silent sound of the space. But I think it's really the choice of the listener and reader of this title to find a meaning out of it as there are many possibilities what it could mean.

The music of *A Right to Silence*

Your choices of pieces were quite different. Of the 14 pieces presented, each of you chose between 8 and 10, with only 2 chosen by all members of DDK, including the one which gives its title to the album. Often (for 8 pieces) two of you chose the same piece, 4 pieces were chosen by only one of you. What made you choose or not certain pieces?

JD The initial instruction was to choose a series of pieces that would make up an entire CD, but every musician made his choice based on a much larger number of pieces, around 45 pre-mixed pieces if I remember correctly, so the size of the CD, its capacity limit, was a determining factor in the choice as it limited the number of possible pieces, then came the question, at least for me, of the unity to be found in the choice of pieces, I opted for pieces that sounded calm, soothing, almost contemplative.

AD I was just following my taste. The pieces which I still liked after listening to them a few times on different days became my choice. It is very subjective and the music is also sounding different each day and changing over the years in my ears. For this reason it's a decision of the moment when it's decided.

JK Simply a very personal attraction to the music of the piece in question.

The chosen order for common pieces is also quite different for the three of you, I only found one case of two pieces following each other in the same order between the three CD versions. Does the order of pieces you chose tell a story? Does it rather define a set of moods of interest to you?

JK The CD is a composition in itself. A game of expectation, tension and contrast.

JD My idea was to create a single, long piece that would extend over time, to allow sound events to emerge and then disappear over a longer period of time, to experience an extended time in which sound appearances and disappearances follow one another. I wanted to assemble the selected pieces into a whole, in my choice the titles are there only to allow the listeners, if they so wish, to enter into the course of the piece, but my intention was to create a long piece from a series of shorter pieces, without noticing the transition from one to the next, to maintain a temporal continuity, to work on a feeling of expanse, of music without beginning or end, of continuous emergences and disappearances.

AD The order is part of a recomposition of the recording. In this case I also follow my taste and intuition which order works for me as a composition of different parts being placed one after the other. It could be seen as a story, but a very abstract one.

What struck you about listening to your three individual versions of the same sound material? Similarities, differences?

AD I was surprised about the similarities. On the other hand I expected certain pieces to appear in the choices of the others. Then I was also surprised by the differences, where in the order the different pieces were placed.

JD What strikes me above all is the fact that the singularity of each piece disappears in favour of the context in which it is placed, it's the temporal continuity associated with a precise location that affects each piece, modifying its meaning and its perception.

JK To discover how the other two listen, this time through their choices, the dramaturgy of their CD and the way they worked with the silences between CD tracks. While I can identify the personalities of my colleagues, listening to their respective CDs really surprised me and showed me another side to the way they listen, different from the one I know from sharing the stage with them for more than 60 concerts!

There is a certain homogeneity in the length of the pieces, while for me in concert I get the impression of a continuum for your performances. In the recording as released, the pieces are essentially between 3 and 5 minutes (with one exception, a piece chosen by Axel only and over twice as long as all the others).

AD For me also on the CD it's a continuum, but consisting out of shorter parts mostly. In this sense there is quite a similarity to our performances in which silence in between the different parts becomes quite important.

JD I think it was the constraints of the CD that led us to favour shorter pieces, whereas we had recorded longer pieces during the residency. In a way, I wanted to rediscover the continuity reminiscent of a live performance by editing the different pieces closely together and in a continuous gesture.

So perhaps your choice for the CD also corresponds to a typical structure in your concerts as you experience it?

JK No, not really. First of all it's really a choice of pieces that I like. The integration of more or less long silences between the pieces, creating a certain tension, can be likened to the silences that appear in our concerts.

AD I see it as another version of a bigger form which happens also in our concerts.

Is there a type of interaction between the three of you that would have liked to have included on this CD and that you didn't find in any version of the CDs of this residency recording?

AD I think the CD is a choice we made, I don't miss anything. In another CD there will be probably different types of interaction, but it's difficult to predict. Each concert we play is different, though we always play a similar kind of piece.

How did you choose to begin your version of the CD?

JK I chose a very classical opening, an arpeggiated chord on the piano...

JD I've always thought that the opening is a particularly important moment, whether in music or literature, for example, it provides the impetus for what's about to emerge, and it's from here that the rest of the piece will be heard.

AD There has to be one piece at the beginning of the CD, after some time it became clear to me which piece of the ones which I selected it should be.

I think choosing the end of pieces was also very important. In fact, one of your pieces is called *The Question of the End*, which to me in this performance is a rather rare example of an animated somewhat "all out" passage. How did you choose to end pieces?

JD As I wanted to rediscover a sense of continuity between the pieces, I somehow erased the endings, or any sense of an ending that might have arisen here or there, and kept only the "real" ending of the last piece.

AD The endings were played in the recording, we always defined beforehand how long a piece should be. Some pieces were longer, others quite short. At some point we played quite a few short pieces, a lot of them were in our selection in the end.

JK As each piece duration is pre-defined, the question of the end does not arise because it is determined by the time that has elapsed "outside". This is a great way to avoid having to find an ending. And it's the same thing in concert, we are freed from the obligation to find an end. The music simply stops. It starts again at the next concert.

What motivated your choice of a piece ending for the CD version of the performance, was your choice similar or rather different than when playing it?

JD My choice was inevitably different, but each time based on attentive listening to what was happening musically.

AD It was quite similar, since in the recording we always defined the length of the piece we want to record.

JK I could choose. When I play a concert, I cannot choose what the other are playing.

On the key point of silence: The length of the silences at the beginning/end of each CD track varies quite a bit between the three of you. Jacques generally shorter, Axel generally longer. When do you prefer the silence to be short, when do you prefer it to be long?

JK It's really a very personal choice, and one that we make at concerts too. We all have a different appreciation of silences, duration and texture.

JD The silences at the end of my pieces, apart from the one that follows the last sound of the last piece, are all continuation silences and not end silences, hence perhaps their brevity?

AD It's a matter of the proportions of the pieces together, the lengths of the silences are part of the musical structure of the CD and shape the form of the music of the CD as one piece. This is a compositional decision and is decided for each silence in relation to the music on the CD.

Can you elaborate on how is silence crucial in improvised music, in live performance, but also in its documentation in published recordings?

JD I've never thought of silence as something that isn't sound, for me, highlighting silence means emphasising a way of listening to sound, a way of organising sound matter, not an absence of something, on the contrary, in what we call silence, there is a particular focus, a concentration of attention on a momentary context that encompasses both space and time.

AD Silence is crucial because it makes it as a mental construction possible that there is a sound. Absolute silence doesn't exist, there is always some kind of sound audible for us being alive. So it gets realized through the relation of volume of different parts of a piece of music. If somebody plays a sound it's an activity, where silence is a different kind of activity of letting something happen instead of making something happen. There are different perspectives on silence, it can be looked as non-activity or a structural component of a piece of music. In published recordings it can appear as the sound of a room, quiet noisy analogue silence or digital silence. It's not possible to create a piece of music without silence. Even if there is a very dense loud piece without any silence in between there will be silence before and after (at least as a mental construction of a piece with a beginning and an end).

JK It's a way of integrating the space, the acoustics, the context, of creating openings to the outside world. It allows us to question the performance, the moment, the attention, of creating tension. Silence is a structuring element in its own right, which can take on different colours, densities and meanings.

Following up on *A Right to Silence*

I'd like to give you a quote I've just stumbled upon. "All the resources of our almost miraculous technology have been thrown into the current assault against silence" (Aldous Huxley). In fact, the stylistic exercise of three versions of the same performance that you propose to your remote listeners would not have been possible without the modes of interaction and communication and the technologies available and in routine daily use today. Can you comment on this in the context of this specific CD, and of your work?

AD I think many people nowadays (and also already in the time of Aldous Huxley) are afraid of silence, because it throws them back to themselves and away from distraction. Distraction is perceived as a more comfortable state because the mind gets busy with something which is presented while when there is silence the mind gets activated to imagine or invent something. This seems to be perceived by most people as more uncomfortable so they try to avoid it by filling up every little space of possible silence with the help of speakers and sound systems. This is also increasingly happening on the visual level with the help of newest technology. The cities of today are flooded with big screens of moving images which adds to the acoustic noise level a visual noise level to create a constant state of distraction for people. I see this CD and also my work as a counterpoint to this kind of dispersal. Instead of numbing the perception of our senses and our imagination, it can be seen as a stimulation for the activation of our senses and imaginativeness.

JD For me, our three versions are not a stylistic exercise, but a way of placing the experience of listening at the centre of the experience of reality, technology is neither good nor bad in itself, what seems more important to me is when Aldous Huxley writes that "desirelessness is the condition of deliverance and illumination", I see here the responsibility placed also at the level of the consumer, and in a way also at

that of the listener, despite the consumerist assault that invades our lives, there is always the personal, active, creative possibility of freeing ourselves from this "Babel of distractions", even before we eventually achieve a total "desirelessness".

JK Perhaps our music, with its silences, tension and clarity, offers a space for reflection, imagination and poetry? A position, a statement in opposition to the ambient noise that has taken on so many visual forms since Huxley, and constantly saturates people's minds. Asking the listener of our triple album 3x45 minutes of sustained attention is a subversive act in itself.

To conclude, in what way did this project develop the way you think about your approach to documenting your work together, whether in concert or in residence, for publication or not, as part of the DDK trio or more generally?

JD I am sure that this project has enabled us to deepen our personal and collective experience of listening, and that it paves the way for other projects that would document an experience of sound in a new way, extending the experience of listening from a single individual to a social constellation.

AD The three CDs are three different perspectives of the musicians of a trio on their own recording. It is interesting to see how similar but also how different the choices of each of us are. Even if musicians have a similar taste they will always make different choices according to their own personality. In this way this recording with its three different perspectives also reflects the composing of our music in real time as the result of three personalities with their different perspectives being part of a similar cultural environment. It can be seen as the same principle of what we do in each concert we play, in a different dimension.

JK It showed me how great it is to define each take's duration before recording. And doing it again and again for four days. Repeating again and again the played material and observing how the sonic situations are developing within these given time frames. I am currently preparing a solo album and working with a similar approach.

If this project were to be repeated, what would you keep, what would you do differently?

JD It would not be a good thing to want to repeat it, it would be going against our approach that was to build a publication project without a preconceived intention, but based on the improvised experience of each moment, listening after listening, to gradually find answers to the questions raised by the internal process of such a proposal.

AD It's difficult for me to know because I might have different ideas in the future at the point in time when it would be repeated. But of course there are variations of it thinkable, for example having three different mixes of the same recording, or each of us mixes and masters his own choice... but it would be already interesting to repeat it as we did now because it wouldn't be the same.