

# David Bindman Sextet

Musicians: **David Bindman**, composer/tenor and soprano saxophones, **Wes Brown**, contrabass, **royal hartigan**, drums, **Art Hirahara**, piano, **Frank London**, trumpet, **Reut Regev**, trombone

*'Jazz is at the forefront of the cultural renewal taking place in Brooklyn, and saxophonist David Bindman has been a quiet but leading force in that movement...The ensemble's wide range of cultural appreciation is not a euphemism for world music. This is exceptionally creative jazz, at times played with great subtlety and sometimes with wild abandon.'* - KARL ACKERMAN, All About Jazz

**DAVID BINDMAN**, saxophonist and composer, creates works that combine many elements: drawing on the motion of dance, exploring the complexity of melody and time unbound, and emphasizing improvisation at the core. His new works, inspired by journeys of discovery and transformation and by sights and sounds close to home, merge old and new musical forms and incorporate rhythmic cycles and modalities from West Africa, India, and around the globe. Heard on the recordings *The Way of the Saxophone* (Innova) and *Far Side of Here* (Omnitone), and *Blood Drum Spirit: Live in China* (Innova), among many others, Bindman's work has been described as 'smart, fun, and multiculturally funky' (Alexander Varty, Georgia Straight) and 'truly a merging of wide sounds...tuneful to the last.' (Andy Bartlett, Cadence). David co-led the Brooklyn Sax Quartet with Fred Ho for a decade; in 2012 he released his sextet's double CD *Sunset Park Polyphony*. Critic Mike Shanley describes the music as 'a new forceful strain of jazz' (Shanley-on Music); Steve Holtje calls the CD '[Bindman's] masterpiece so far' (Culture Catch); Sergio Piccirilli writes that 'David Bindman completes here a successful creative circle born of his curiosity to understand the world' (El Intruso). Bindman seeks to create work that offers, in any way possible, artistic alternatives to the profit-driven imperatives that imperil life, that deny justice, and that go against the human spirit and the natural world. He lives in Sunset Park, Brooklyn.



David Bindman photo by Robert Adam Mayer

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## Audio:

<http://www.davidbindman.com/sounds.html>

## Video:

<http://www.davidbindman.com/video.html>

## Stage plot/tech requirements:

[click to download stage plot \(pdf\)](#)

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(L to R) David Bindman, Frank London, royal hartigan, Art Hirahara, Reut Regev, Wes Brown, Brooklyn 2012  
photo by Xanyani Ephraim

## History

Three decades ago saxophonist **David Bindman**, bassist **Wes Brown** and drummer **royal hartigan** began a unique and enduring musical collaboration: drawing on specific aspects of world music traditions, and reaching deep into the African American tradition, they have developed a way of playing and body of work that combines myriad influences, spans generations, and is at once rooted, radical, and traditional. Meeting at Wesleyan University in 1981, Bindman, Brown and hartigan began playing as a trio; soon after they formed JUBA with trombonist Bill Lowe, and became part of Talking Drums, under the leadership of Ghanaian master drummers Abraham Adzenyah and Freeman Donkor. Originally performing highlife and traditional West African drumming and dance, Talking Drums evolved to incorporate original compositions that merged traditional music of the Ewe, Fon and Asante peoples with jazz. In 1987 Talking Drums toured the USA and released *Some Day Catch Some Day Down* (Shanachie 1987, reissue Innova 2011). While at Wesleyan, Bindman, Brown, and hartigan also studied South Indian Karnatic music with Tanjore Ranganathan and Tanjore Vishuanathan, and have since applied this study of *tala* (time cycles), and *raga* (modes) to build and communicate rhythmic and melodic structures, often involving asymmetrical time cycles and extended rhythmic forms. The collaboration continues today with the quartet **Blood Drum Spirit**, led by hartigan and joined by pianist **Art Hirahara**, and the **David Bindman Ensemble** (sextet), joined additionally by trumpeter **Frank London** and trombonist **Reut Regev**. Projects have involved dancers, poets, and visual artists.

In 2006 David began composing a new series of works for sextet; in 2008 he began presenting these works in community concerts in Brooklyn, including performances at the Brooklyn Public Library co-sponsored by the Brooklyn Arts Council. In October 2010, the sextet recorded a double CD of material; *Sunset Park Polyphony* was released in 2012. Among the works, the title piece reflects the many languages spoken, the sounds of children playing, and the sounds of nature in Sunset Park, Brooklyn. The work draws on complex rhythmic forms and multiple levels of time, with an introductory melodic *alapana* (rubato form) based on the *pantuvrali* (Hindu devotional) raga. The *Landings Suite* is a six-part work that follows an imaginary character's odyssey as she/he flies toward the outer reaches of the universe, only to return to confront the realities of life on earth, to teach, and to plant trees. The piece incorporates *gahu* and *adzohu* rhythms from the Ewe and Fon people of Ghana, Togo, Benin and Nigeria. In 2013 the ensemble presented new works while in residence at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth.

David Bindman co-led the acclaimed Brooklyn Sax Quartet with baritone saxophonist Fred Ho for a decade; Wes Brown has toured with legendary pianist Earl "Fatha" Hines; royal hartigan has written three books on West African drumming and jazz; Art Hirahara performs with numerous artists and leads his trio; Frank London leads The Klezmatics and is a leader of New York's radical Jewish music scene; Reut Regev leads her ensemble R\*Time and works with numerous ensembles.

### **Press quotes:**

'It takes a wealth of ideas and inspiration to fill two CDs and saxophonist David Bindman justifies his large-canvas approach at every step... The orchestration, for three horns, piano, bass and drums, is boundlessly colorful and indeed polyphonic.' - DAVID R. ADLER, New York City Jazz Record

'The self-released Sunset Park Polyphony is saxophonist David Bindman's most ambitious recording to date...The sextet handles the challenges of compositions such as "Shape One," which contains multiple layers of time, without breaking a sweat. Thus, the music, even at its knottiest, carries a comfortable, lived-in quality. And shifting rhythmic foundations don't trip them up as soloists, either...Bindman's beautifully crafted and executed major statement should be a harbinger of things to come.' -- ED HAZELL - Jazziz Summer 2012 print edition

'This self-released two-CD sextet album is his masterpiece so far...Bindman's compositions (he wrote all the tracks) are consistently compelling; they're melodic and rhythmic enough to be easily accessible, but complex enough and profound enough to reward deep listening, with piquant harmonies from the horns and moments of refreshing counterpoint. The band's not star-filled by the standards of the average music fan, but NYC jazz aficionados will recognize enough names to realize how good it is...Whether in concert or on record -- ideally, both -- David Bindman is someone whose work you should become familiar with, because music this good needs to be shared.' - STEVE HOLTJE, Culture Catch

'The strong path developed by saxophonist and composer David Bindman, while centered in the new current of free improvisation, is marked by multiple artistic elements, which include archaic and cutting edge musical forms, rhythmic cycles and modalities from West Africa, India and other ethnic traditions of complex melodic explorations that are rarely heard; and a search for the integration of musically cohesive planes into an aesthetic ideology able to represent diverse world circles, feelings, history, and cultural heritages based on a mimetic concept of classical aesthetics... David Bindman completes here a successful creative circle born of his curiosity to understand the world.' - SERGIO PICCIRILLI, El Intruso (translated from Spanish by Nestor Rodriguez)

'Don't expect "new-age" noodling from saxophonist/composer Bindman...Intelligent, multi-rhythmic, at turns lyrical or challenging but never dull, this aural experience is worth your attention.' - RICHARD KAMINS, Step Tempest

'Bindman does a fine job of setting up pieces where two or more lines are happening simultaneously...He assembles different sections of freer exploration yet there is a strong underlying thread that holds it together...[a] splendid sextet.' - BRUCE GALLANTER, Downtown Music Gallery

'Although the album might be considered an entry into the world music category, it's better to call it a new forceful strain of jazz.' - MIKE SHANLEY, Shanley on Music

'The David Bindman Ensemble, in their recent 2-CD opus Sunset Park Polyphony (self-released), follows in the footsteps of ensembles dedicated to modern jazz composition and adventurous improvisation. Like the ensembles of Henry Threadgill, Dave Holland, and Tim Byrne, this band's music has structured compositional elements interwoven with contemporary soloing that is not quite free in the sense of Ayler or Ornette, but neither is it tied into bop-lifting, according to the jazz detective I hired to investigate... the ensemble has much going for it...' -- GREGO APPLGATE EDWARDS, GappleGate Music Review

'Many of the arrangements create connective harmonies resulting from the wash of sonic colors that arises from counterpoint among three horns and three rhythm instruments. Concurrently the pieces use absolute textures or the suggestions of Karnatic and African sound-cycles to give added heft to their solos... an earnest CD from a mature artist...'-- KEN WAXMAN, Jazzword.com

'The results, as interpreted by this crack sextet, are never less than absorbing and challenging. As the music twists and turns, everyone gets their turn in the spotlight. The musicians rise to the occasion of Bindman's demanding multi-part compositions with passionate and consistently impressive solo work by all hands...Well worth hearing, again and again.' -- STUART KREMSKY, IAJRC (the quarterly magazine of the International Association of Jazz Record Collectors) Journal Vol. 45. No. 2 – June 2012

## **Bios:**

**David Bindman** is a saxophonist, composer, and bandleader living in Brooklyn, NY. David co-founded the Brooklyn Sax Quartet with Fred Ho, recording *The Way of the Saxophone* and *Far Side of Here*. He has performed and recorded with Wadada Leo Smith, Kevin Norton, Efran Elisha, Anthony Braxton, Talking Drums, Adam Lane, and many others. In 2012 David released his sextet's acclaimed double CD *Sunset Park Polyphony*.

**Wes Brown**, contrabass, has performed and toured with a wide range of musical personalities. Wes plays acoustic and electric bass, keyboard, percussion and African flute. Wes has appeared on numerous recordings, has toured the world with legendary pianist Earl "Fatha" Hines, and has performed with Ed Blackwell, Bill Barron, and many other jazz, African, and reggae artists.

**Frank London**, trumpeter/composer, is a member of the Klezmatics and Hasidic New Wave, and has performed and recorded with John Zorn, LL Cool J, Mel Torme, Lester Bowie's Brass Fantasy, LaMonte Young, They Might Be Giants, David Byrne and many others. His own recordings include *Invocations* (cantorial music) and Frank London's Klezmer Brass Allstars' *Di Shikere Kapelye*. He has composed for film and theater and taught Jewish music in Canada, Crimea and the Catskills. He has been featured on HBO's *Sex And The City*, and was a co-founder of Les Miserables Brass Band and the Klezmer Conservatory Band.

**royal hartigan** is a percussionist who has studied and performed the musics of Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Europe, and the Americas. He has written three books with CD/DVD: *West African Rhythms for Drumset*, *Dancin' On The Time*, and *West African Ewe Rhythms for Drumset*. He travels to West Africa each summer to teach, perform, and do research. He was chosen as a J. William Fulbright research scholar through the U.S. State Department, conducting research on traditional Philippine kulintang and kalinga music at the University of the Philippines in 2006.

**Art Hirahara** is a jazz pianist/composer, originally from the San Francisco Bay Area, now residing in Brooklyn, NY. He received his Bachelor of Music degree in Electronic and Computer Music from the Oberlin College Conservatory in Oberlin, OH, and a Master of Fine Arts degree in jazz piano performance at California Institute of the Arts in Valencia, CA. Art has served as a "Jazz Ambassador" on a seven-week tour of the Middle East, where he performed, lectured and conducted workshops with local musicians. He has performed with Akira Tana and Rufus Reid, among many others, and leads his ensemble.

**Reut Regev**, trombonist, composer and bandleader, born and raised in Israel, has been living and creating music in NYC for over a decade. Finding her own voice in various styles, including Jazz, Latin, Klezmer, Rock, Blues and more, Reut records and tours with some of the finest musicians in their respective fields, including Anthony Braxton, Frank London, Butch Morris, Firewater, Elliott Sharp, Metropolitan Klezmer, Hazmat Modine and many more. Reut leads R\*time, an internationally acclaimed band featured in festivals around the world. R\*time's recent Enja release "Exploring the Vibe" has been getting fantastic response worldwide.