



April-  
May 2019

CD Release Tour  
feat. Olivier  
Lake

## NEW ALBUM FALL 2018 SAMUEL BLASER QUARTET EARLY IN THE MORNING

**Early in the Morning** is an album inspired by the blues, conceived and arranged by Samuel Blaser, under the artistic direction of Robert Sadin. It was recorded by Dave Darlington at Water Music in New Jersey on January 14 & 15, 2017 and will be released in the fall of 2018.

The music explores both Samuel Blaser's obsession for Delta Blues and his desire for an intensely fluid way of playing jazz. A signature style rooted in expressiveness, authenticity and boldness, Blaser uses free jazz tools and improvisational strategies to blend them with well-known, earthy blues songs.

Surrounded by an exceptional group of musicians and two distinguished guests, he reinvents music recorded by Leadbelly, Sam Collins, Clarence Ashley, Dick Devall and Alan Lomax... a sort of an extension of Clifford Jordan's «*These Are My Roots: Clifford Jordan plays Leadbelly*».

The music combines images from timeless Delta Blues to Ornette Coleman's iconoclastic classic album, «*Free Jazz*», and open-ended elements of pioneers like Jimmy Giuffre and Don Cheery, to create a new, exciting and original repertoire.

**Listen & Download "Early In The Morning"**

### Line Up

Samuel Blaser (trombone)  
Russ Lossing (piano & keys)  
Masatoshi Kamaguchi (bass)  
Gerry Hemingway (drums)

*With Special Guests:*  
Oliver Lake (alto saxophone )  
Wallace Roney (trumpet)

### 10 Titles / 48 minutes

01. Early in the Morning
02. Tom Sherman's Barroom
03. Murder's Home
04. Creepy Crawler Blues
05. The Carpenter
06. Klaxon
07. Levee Camp Moan Blues
08. Mal's Blues
09. Lonesome Road Blues
10. Black Betty



**“Blaser is one of the most globally recognized performers on his instrument.” - Berliner Zeitung**

At a time when more musicians are trying to be heard than ever before, rare gems like Samuel Blaser seem, paradoxically, rise above it all. Since his 2007 debut as a leader, *7<sup>th</sup> Heaven* (Between the Lines), Blaser has grown at an almost incomprehensible rate, from a straight-ahead hard bopper in his mid-twenties to an innovative free player and ever-searching composer and bandleader in his early thirties - one whose improvisational strength has received high praise from media the world over.

Born and raised in La Chaux-de-Fonds, Switzerland, Blaser lived in New York City for many years before relocating to Berlin, where he currently resides. He began trombone lessons at the age of 9, and his early interests ranged from Swiss folk music to American R&B and jazz. He entered the local conservatory at 14 and graduated in 2002 after being awarded prizes in both the jazz and classical spheres, including the 2000 *Benny Golson Prize*. Participation in the heralded Vienna Art Orchestra and European Radio Big Band eventually led to a Fullbright Scholarship, facilitating studies in the United States at the Purchase College Conservatory of Music.

In his relatively short career, Blaser has worked with Swiss percussion legend Pierre Favre, pianist Hal Galper, drummer John Hollenbeck and saxophonist Michael Blake, and has worked with *Grammy Award*-winning producer Robert Sadin, and more recently with Daniel Humair and Michel Portal.

2018 will see Blaser touring with his trio featuring French guitarist Marc Ducret and Danish drummer Peter Bruun. Blaser will also be back on the road with his original quartet to promote *the new album Early in the Morning*, an homage to the Blues with Russ Lossing on piano, Masa Kamaguchi on bass, drummer Gerry Hemingway, Wallace Roney on trumpet and Oliver Lake on alto saxophone.



## UPCOMING LIVE DATES

APRIL - MAY 2019 / EARLY IN THE MORNING / CD RELEASE TOUR  
SAMUEL BLASER QUARTET feat. OLIVER LAKE

FALL 2018 / EARLY IN THE MORNING / PROMOTIONAL TOUR

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## KEY POINTS

- Born in Switzerland in 1981, studied at the Conservatoire de musique in La Chaux-de-Fonds.
- Fulbright Scholarship - SUNY Purchase University - 2007 Master in Music. 2006 "Honorable Mention" - J.J Johnson competition.
- Tours world-wide as a leader, performs regularly as a sideman with Michael Blake, Marc Ducret, Pierre Favre, Russ Lossing, Billy Mintz, Daniel Humair...
- +100 concerts per year
- Holder of O1B-Visa (3 years)
- Nine albums as a leader:

**18 monologues élastiques**, (audio-book, 2019)

**Spring Rain**, Whirlwind Recordings, 2015

**A Mirror to Machaut**, Songlines, 2013

**As The Sea**, Hat Hut, 2012

**Boundless**, Hat Hut, 2011

**Consort in Motion**, Kind of Blue Records, 2011

**Pieces of Old Sky**, Clean Feed, 2009

**Solo Bone**, Slam Productions, 2009

**7th Heaven**, Between The Lines, 2008

- **Publications:**

Big Mama Trombone (Audio-Book)  
Ed. LittleVillage/harmonia mundi, 2016

- **Commercial highlights:**

Performances with Paul Motian, Jimmy Heath, Clark Terry, Phil Woods, Lee Scratch Perry, Buddy de Franco, New York Voices, Vienna Art Orchestra

- **Awards & Honors:**

Downbeat Critics Poll, USA, Rising star trombonist, #2 in 2017, #4 in 2016, #4 in 2015, #7 in 2013; Rising star composer, #13 in 2015

Académie du Jazz, France, Nominee in 2015 & 2016 & 2017

New York City Jazz Record, USA, Musician of the year, 2014

- 13 commissioned works for contemporary orchestras, theaters, ensembles from 2002-2016 (Conspiration du Syphon, Nouvel Ensemble Contemporain, Songlines, Harmonipan, Whirlwind).



## The universal blues of Samuel Blaser

This musician's image and history are solidly anchored in the swamps at the heart of the Mississippi Delta. For an artist as talented as Samuel Blaser, the blues has turned out to be a truly inexhaustible source of inspiration. Moved by the depth of expression found in this deeply-rooted art form, the young trombonist pulls together the essence of the current and former jazz scenes adding a contemporary touch which breathes new life into the musical tradition. The idea is not new and has been around for over a century: who can forget the stylistic changes from boogie woogie to free jazz of the pianist Jaki Byard who played with Charles Mingus in the 1960s? There is also a trace of the strange musical dialogue between pianists Mary Lou Williams and Cecil Taylor in 1977. It is easier to understand Samuel Blaser's mindset, if one can recall some of the courageous mavericks (including Jimmy Giuffre) who worked to produce a short-lived Third Stream somewhere between jazz and contemporary music.

Samuel Blaser takes his time slow cooking the ingredients of his music. And he knows how to vary the recipe and play around with cooking times. Here he employs a subtle harmony to bring out the theme of *Levee Camp Moan Blues*. Elsewhere, in *Black Betty*, he easily transposes Leadbelly's singing and guitar into the voice of his trombone and rhythm of Gerry Hemingway's drums. In *Tom Sherman's Barroom*, he borrows György Ligeti's form of accompaniment which alternates thirds and sixths to produce a sound which is as sober as it is effective. By playing the trombone softly in *Murder's Home*, Blaser creates an atmosphere of rare darkness sustained by a range of harmonious tones reminiscent of György Kurtag's symphonic masterpiece, *Stele*. In *Klaxon*, based on a poem by Blaise Cendrars, he calls to mind a form of writing used by the same Kurtag for one of his *Kafka Fragments*. He frees up the melody in *The Carpenter* to strengthen the flow of the dialogue without losing any of its force. It's not long before Samuel Blaser strikes a disturbing note by asking Russ Lossing to 'dirty-up', his keyboard playing (*Creepy Crawler Blues*). And it's not long before his collaborators are asked to recreate the spirit of the African-American community by interpreting freely and collectively the theme of *Early in the Morning*. And again in *Creepy Crawly Blues*, he knowingly throws a spanner in the works, by imagining an 11/8 tempo for Lossing's keyboard and Masa Kamaguchi's double bass. Here in the aptly named *Mal's Blues*, he rediscovers the lyrical vein of Mal Waldron and Steve Lacy. And finally in *Lonesome Road Blues*, he confuses the issue by building a deceptively unstable structure with the melody resting on the off beat.

In his time, Béla Bartok, used his own collection of oral traditions to compose a much more personal body of work. Samuel Blaser today aims to celebrate the broad appeal of the blues, this popular form of music by bringing in, *in situ*, the ethnomusicologist Alan Lomax whose recordings are used by the trombonist. It's no accident that Blaser draws inspiration from some of the well-known independent composers of the 20th century, such as Ligeti and Kurtag, whose own works are directly descendent from the Bartok tradition.

Arnaud Merlin  
(France Musique)