



## PRESS RELEASE

### SIKORA/CULPO DUO: THE PARIS SESSIONS

*"Open your mind and listen!"*

*- Lynn René Bayley*

**Sikora/Culpo Duo** music has been described as open and responsive, with their musical lines being cohesive and together yet springing into unexpected directions, diverging and then converging, filled with surprise and humor. In sum: free and fresh.

The Parisian duo of saxophonist *Catherine Sikora* and pianist *Christopher Culpo* was formed in 2014, when Sikora was artist in residence at the Centre Culturel Irlandais in Paris. The artists began their collaboration immediately upon meeting, establishing a musical rapport that has continued to evolve in the following years.

In February 2020, the duo reconvened in Paris and spent a full week in residence at L'Atelier de la Main d'Or, dedicating whole days to recording, and ending the week with a live concert. The resulting music reflects the evolution of the duo into a distinct creative unit with an aesthetic that is unique to itself, reflective of both musicians but also standing very much apart from either of their work in other settings. The 2020 session is also a new chapter for the duo, as for the first time Catherine brought her soprano saxophone to Paris; prior to this, the duo had always been tenor sax with the piano. Christopher Culpo has a long and distinguished history of working with masters of the soprano saxophone (including the legendary Steve Lacy), and this new work is a logical next step in that creative legacy.

The Paris Sessions Volume I: Mimesis was released on Bandcamp only in April 2020, and has been praised by critics and fans alike. Together with Volume ii, the resulting double album will be released on all major distribution outlets on September 4th, 2020. Both albums feature original artwork for each track, created by the artist Anne Graaf directly in response to the music.

# REVIEWS

## ‘The Paris Sessions Volume I: Mimesis’

*“Then again, the architecture is constructed jointly... two master masons laying course after course, conjuring shape and structure without predictable blueprint, building one upon the other, closely elegant, climbing on a dare, avoiding symmetrical cliché to behold clean lines and subtle curlicues, zig-zag colonnades and sudden, brief friezes... piano and sax lines momentarily tightly wound in helical pinnacles of sound from which to take in the view.” – **A Jazz Noise***

**Link:** [ajazznoise.com/sikora-culpo-duo-the-paris-sessions-volume-1-mimesis/](http://ajazznoise.com/sikora-culpo-duo-the-paris-sessions-volume-1-mimesis/)

*“...there are also free jazz musicians, particularly reed-and-piano duos, that seem to understand that no matter how completely spontaneous music is, it must still be music. The duo of Ivo Perelman and Matthew Shipp is one of these, and here the duo of Catherine Sikora and Christopher Culpo stake their claim to join them in the free jazz hierarchy. Open your mind and listen!” – **Lynn René Bayley, Art Music Lounge***

**Link:**

[artmusiclounge.wordpress.com/2020/05/02/sikora-presents-paris-sessions-vol-1/comment-page-1/](http://artmusiclounge.wordpress.com/2020/05/02/sikora-presents-paris-sessions-vol-1/comment-page-1/)

*“Thus, while not in any way mainstream, Sikora and Culpo have produced a compelling and pleasant set of exploratory improv that makes for good music on a rainy Sunday morning. Or any other morning for that matter.” – **Avant Music News***

**Link:**

[avantmusicnews.com/2020/05/03/amn-reviews-sikora-culpo-duo-the-paris-sessions-volume-1-mimesis-2020-bandcamp/](http://avantmusicnews.com/2020/05/03/amn-reviews-sikora-culpo-duo-the-paris-sessions-volume-1-mimesis-2020-bandcamp/)

# ARTIST BIOS

Saxophonist **Catherine Sikora** is known primarily for her work as a free improviser, working solo as well as in group settings. Her big, expressive tone and seamless integration of extended techniques into her melodic structures are unique and deeply personal. She has a profound interest in the art of practice, seeing this as a creative art form in itself, separate from the art of performance. She has performed live on stages all over the US and Europe, as well as in Australia and Canada.

Sikora's first solo album 'Jersey', a set of improvisations for tenor saxophone, was released on Relative Pitch Records in July 2016, and a second solo work on soprano sax, 'Warrior', was released in August 2019. Other notable recent recordings featuring Catherine's work include; duo recording 'untitled: after' with Brooklyn based drummer Brian Chase (Yeah Yeah Yeahs, Drums and Drones), 'Chrysalis', a duo with Eric Mingus, 'The Paris Sessions Volume i: Mimesis' and 'The Spectral Life of Things' with Paris based pianist Christopher Culpo, 'Eris 136199' trio with Han-earl Park and Nick Didkovsky, and 'The Mind's Mural' with Enrique Haneine and his quartet. Further releases of albums with Eris 136199, Christopher Culpo, Paul G Smyth as well as solo (Warrior ii) are coming later in 2020.

Sikora is active as an educator, working with students on advanced concepts of improvisation and strategies for creativity, as well as on overcoming performance anxiety and other musical inhibitions.

*"Catherine Sikora is a virtuosic firebrand on tenor and soprano saxophones whose star is on the rise."*

**—The Brooklyn Rail**



**Christopher Culpo** is a performer and composer whose work lies at the confluence of contemporary classical music, jazz, and free improvisation. He has written chamber and symphonic music, vocal and opera, for the dance and the theatre, and has composed and improvised music for silent films.

His performing career has taken him on stages as diverse as the Cluny Jazz Festival (France), Blossoms Festival (Belgium), The Old Town House in Cape Town (South Africa), Musicafoscari/San Servolo Jazz Fest Venezia (Italy), the Radar Festival, Festival Eurojazz (Mexico), the Adelaide Cabaret Festival and the Sydney Opera House (Australia). Christopher Culpo has released several albums, most recently *The Spectral Life of Things* (2018) and *Mimesis* (2020) with saxophonist Catherine Sikora.

Culpo's composition *Mundus Imaginalis* for solo piano and strings was awarded second prize in the IV International Uuno Klami Composition Competition and was performed and recorded in Finland in November 2019.

*"But, After Midnight, Before Dawn by Christopher Culpo was the real gem of the evening. Written for string quartet with two percussionists, it's a strikingly vivid work that explores the elusive worlds of sleeping and dreaming, to hallucinogenic effect."*

- **Stephen Brookes (Washington Post)**

