



MiRR Collective – Cultural Policy Focused on Music and Cultural Exchange with Kansas City and UNESCO Creative Cities

The MiRR Collective is a French Paris based organization that develops and promotes creative projects centered around jazz aesthetics, composition, and improvisation. We receive support from the French Ministry of Culture, the City of Paris, copyright management societies (SACEM, ADAMI, SPEDIDAM), as well as local and regional authorities in Île-de-France.

Since 2012, the MiRR Collective has maintained a close relationship with the Kansas City music scene, organizing concerts in Paris for artists such as Julia Haile, Hermon Mehari, Ben Leifer, Peter Schlamb, Ryan J. Lee, Krystle Warren, Logan Richardson, Bryan Hicks, and Jeff Harshbarger. Given the artistic quality and musical heritage these musicians embody, it seemed essential to introduce them to Parisian audiences. This opportunity opened the door to new perspectives and collaborations.

Later, during the **MiRR Jazz Days Festival**—which we organized in 2014, 2016, and 2019 and which features three days of concerts across various Paris venues—we welcomed artists such as vocalist and bandleader Krystle Warren, the Hermon Mehari Group, and saxophonist Logan Richardson, while also initiating an international exchange, MiRR. This exchange gave Kansas City musicians the opportunity to perform in some of Paris's most renowned jazz venues, while French musicians were able to travel to Kansas City and engage with its vibrant and diverse musical community.

We also highlighted this collaboration during the **Banlieues Bleues Festival**, a major Paris-area festival, where we featured vocalist and bandleader Julia Haile alongside top musicians from both Kansas City and the Paris jazz scene. In parallel, drummer **Benjamin Sanz** had the opportunity to perform at the **Kansas City Museum** during the **Juneteenth commemoration** and at various cultural events in July 2024, including the **White Hall Recital** and **Dunbar Park and clubs**. This trip marked a key moment in the history of the MiRR Collective and attracted the interest of the French Ministry of Culture. Indeed, it opened new possibilities for French cultural policy and artistic development in new territories.

It is important to acknowledge the essential role played by **UNESCO** and the **KC Creative Cities network**, in bringing this project to life, as well as the contribution of French institutions such as the **Paris Regional Directorate of Cultural Affairs (DRAC)**, **SPEDIDAM**, **SACEM**, and various patrons including the **Kemper Family Foundation**, **Owen/Cox Dance Group**, and numerous local partners in Kansas City—clubs, museums, and community organizations.

This summer 2025, Hermon Mehari brought his new quintet on a European tour (France Italy, Belgium and Germany), featuring Kansas City top musicians such as Zack Morrow and Peter Schlamb.

We look forward to developing new projects, including an ongoing collaboration with saxophonist **David Murray**, which we hope will lead to concerts in both clubs and universities, further enriching the cultural exchange we continue to build.

Alain Gripoix, président

