

Demonshaker (in the Occident - *Ds*)
Deggi Daaj (in Senegal - *DD*)

concept

Ds/DD is six drummers and one conductor *en cercle*– a geometric formation of energetic wisdom on the cue of certain traditions of theater and ritual. However it is not a drum battle, rather a celebratory urban ritual... A call to the dance needing no words, sensitive to the unique temporary collective of audience gathered in the space in the present moment, and as well engaging as a musical response to architecture, to the acoustic and energetic properties of a specific space. *Ds/DD* is a 7-headed 1-mind-no-mind organism delivering a precise, gradually blossoming sonic joybomb. An offering, opening the energetic space toward the provocation of an experience of purification for all present. It has been described as a monolithic experience in the physicality of sound– sound as bath, sound as massage, sound as weapon, sound as catharsis. The public is welcome to move freely throughout the performance, and the center of the circle is undefined open space, which has revealed itself in performances to be a nest for immersive listening, dance, trance.... any audience reaction to the intensity of the sound (including leaving) is accepted as synergy and cherished without judgement.

Depending upon the nature of the space and event, *Ds/DD* may perform fully improvised using a "two-way street" conducting language (explained below, see *rehearsals*) developed by Nathan Fuhr, and/or with scores composed by him specifically for the present event and constellation of musicians.

Conceived by conductor Nathan Fuhr, *Ds/DD* draws its influence from his research, experience, and gradual demystification of traditional trance music healing and ritual dance practices, specifically the Moroccan Gnawa *Leila* ceremony and the Senegalese sabar *Tanebeer* urban dance ritual. *Ds/DD* tangentially acknowledges his brief teen experience in American underground rave culture, and is furthermore informed by his subsequent background as a precocious conductor of classical symphony orchestras. From an occidental music perspective, one will also perceive the influence of contemporary immersive electronic composers such as Francisco Lopez and Phill Niblock.

The project's occidental name "Demonshaker" is of nothing occult– simply tapped from a casual American expression often used by one of Nathan's collaborating musicians, to "shake out the demons" via the creative performative act. And the name is sincere... so let's keep it simple.

Ds/DD was born on 11 September 2007 as a one-off event in the spirit of protest for Berlin's Zentrale Randlage being shut-down by the city, then subsequently and similarly invited to perform for the winter solstice close-out party of Tesla Berlin. The project evolved toward a crystallized concept for western concert performance subsequent to a 3-month return to Morocco and Senegal, and debuted at Lisbon's Ze dos Bois in April 2008. Upon return to Berlin in September, *Ds/DD* was promptly invited as the surprise live act for the close-out party of the 103 Club, and in December, as the finale act for the Tanznacht Festival Berlin 2008. After a winter and spring of research and concertizing in Senegal, the project's most recent splash was in Mexico this summer as part of PRISMA Forum International, where Nathan was an invited artist. More information about Nathan's work, and links to *Ds/DD* photo galleries, are available on the web at nza.zaadz.com.



practicalities

space:

A medium-to-large flat space is necessary, sufficient for a circle of 6 drumsets and one conductor, with space between each for the members of audience to comfortably enter the circle if desired. Open-air performances have limited possibility, as walls are required for acoustic reasons.

audience:

The audience is free to sit or stand around the circle of performers. There is no tribune. As previously stated, the center of the circle is undefined open space.

ensemble:

Ds/DD does not tour intercontinentally, as it is essential to work with local drummers who speak the rhythmic & energetic language of the present public. Outside of Berlin, Nathan is generally collaborating in the curating of the ensemble with one local drummer, who invites the other five. If he and this drummer have not already met, one pre-visitation will be required, for 2-3 days. If this is not possible, one solution is an invitation be offered to a drummer from Nathan's circle to accompany him, and play in the ensemble with five local drummers (selected by the host, in consultation with Nathan). As he is working implicitly with the spirit which calls someone to choose the drums in the primal first instance, any open-minded and positive-spirited professional drummer may participate regardless of stylistic background.

rehearsals:

A workshop-like process in which the drummers learn to both follow and use proactively Nathan's "two-way street" conducting language– a system of gestures developed specifically for the instrument, for real-time composing and sculpting of flow– and explore their own creativity within the extraordinary experience of playing with 5 other drummers. Three days, with optional fourth, afternoons of 3-4 hours each, followed by dinners together.

time and duration:

The performance usually transpires as an aftershow late evening finale event, and is generally rendered in a single set of maximum 1 hour, or in 2 sets of ca. 40 minutes each.

technical:

Basic light & equipment set-up and (acoustic) soundcheck, 2 hours, the afternoon of the show. Break before the show is essential for the performers.



documentation:

The event should be documented by 2 video cameras and audio recording; photography optional.

fees:

To be negotiated, for 5 drummers and 1 drummer/curator (or 6 drummers equally, depending on the situation), and 1 conductor with travel and housing expenses.

publicity:

The above concept text shall not be used for event promotion. Project name and performer line-up are sufficient. Additional texts/quotations subject to approval by Nathan.



Berlin dancers Frank Willens and Lara Martelli celebrating the center of the sound, September 2008

photos: Marc Seestaedt, Leonardo Wen

nathan fuhr
urban rituals
germany +491781474474
senegal +221775428571
usa +13216267494
skype: oceansatori
oceansatori@gmail.com
nza.zaadz.com

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