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Cedric Hanriot on 'Time is Color Vol.2': Exploring Creativity, Collaboration, Innovation

Frank Bell · 5 February 2025



Cedric Hanriot has quickly become a vital presence in the music business, achieving success as a pianist, composer, and sound designer. His career has been colored by collaborations on GRAMMY-winning projects, working with the legends Herbie Hancock, Robert Glasper, and Terri Lyne Carrington, and he continues to break new ground. *Time is Color Vol.2* is his latest project, a very personal and somewhat daring sequel to his 2022 output *Time is Color*. The

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Time is color vol2 - a luminous world

Cédric Hanriot

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00:00

- 1 Impermanence
Cédric Hanriot 00:27
- 2 A luminous world, Pt. 2
Cédric Hanriot 03:35
- 3 A creative mind
Cédric Hanriot, Braxton Cook 05:26

Featuring an all-star cast of guests, including US vocalist Tony Moreau, UK saxophonist/rapper Soweto Kinch, MCs JSWISS and Charles X, and French narrators Arthur H and Cyrielle Clair, *Time is Color Vol.2* is a lushly textured narrative adventure. Hanriot's trio, with Bertrand Beruard on bass and Antonin Violot on drums, provides the platform for a diverse album with many different atmospheric and textural movements and surprises.



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In this exclusive interview, Hanriot discusses the creative process, the impact of working with industry legends, and the philosophical ideas (spirituality and quantum physics) that shape his artistry. He explains his approach to genre blending, balancing artistic vision and commercial viability, and his forward-looking vision for music.

I've always been interested in spirituality and discovered quantum physics quite recently. I was amazed that quantum physics is the scientific side of spiritual concepts.

How might the cross-genre blend of jazz, hip-hop, soul, and electronica in *Time is Color Vol.2* expand your audience and industry impact?

When I started writing this new album, I was not really concerned about expanding my audience or any business-related questions in the first place; I just wanted this new album to create something I had never done before: I wanted to make a record whose focus would be the voice: spoken words, rap and vocals melodies. As a pianist/instrumentalist, I have made albums with other instrumentalists and sometimes some vocals, but the voice was never the focus of the music. I wanted different vocalists/rappers/poets/singers, and I also wanted the songs to be short, more like pop song format.

So, I first wrote the music with those parameters in mind, and then I gave the message I wanted to express for each tune to the vocalist so he/she could write accordingly.

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How have your collaborations with Herbie Hancock, Robert Glasper, and Terri Lyne Carrington shaped your vision and opened new opportunities?

It's a blessing to have had the opportunity (and still) to talk, learn from, and create with Herbie and Terri Lyne, amongst others! I will be grateful for the rest of my life. They are music; they talk about life more than about music. They are very spiritual, which significantly impacted me and, therefore, my music. They are not afraid of trying new things, new collaborations, to try something they haven't done before. That's a huge inspiration.

Barack Obama featured your project on his summer playlist—how did that

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How do you balance highlighting high-profile guests on 'Time is Color Vol.2' while maintaining your signature sound?

Great question: I had already recorded the songs with my trio before introducing them to the different guests. So they picked up the one that would resonate the most, and then I gave them a direction/message, and then they wrote accordingly. When I first wrote the music, I thought there would be lyrics/spoken words, so I left some room for that.



How do your album's spiritual and quantum physics themes resonate with fans and shape its promotional narrative?

I did not think much about the fans or anything when I chose the Spiritual and Quantum Physics theme. I chose the theme because I am very interested in those

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you look at the great scientists, most of them were/are spiritual – As I said before, spirituality and quantum physics – are 2 sides of the same coin. What I'm hoping is that fans will sit down and listen to the music, vibe and dance along to the music, and maybe pick up some messages from the lyrics – just have a good time – There's nothing intellectual in the music of this album –

What have you learned from your GRAMMY-winning collaborations about balancing work as a sideman and leading solo projects?

I am grateful to be a professional musician and hope to have an impact on people through my music. I work hard, am a nice and genuine person, and am not afraid to try new things.

Given its Bill Evans and hip-hop influences, how do you ensure *Time is Color Vol.2* reaches beyond jazz audiences?

Because this album has many other influences than jazz—especially from the bass and drums—it's also the first album that is so produced, so we spent a lot of time in the studio for the post-production.

How will you leverage the album's international guests and multilingual elements to connect with diverse audiences digitally and live?

English is everywhere and a universal language; most of the songs are in English; there are 2 in French, and for those two songs, I'd recommend listening to the interpretation and timbre of the voice rather than trying to understand word by word.

How does your blend of acoustic and analog synth sounds influence how labels and promoters perceive your music?

I don't know how to answer this question. I don't ask myself that many questions.

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What advice would you give to musicians creating innovative, cross-genre music while balancing artistic integrity and commercial success?

I recommend listening to themselves – and creating what they hear without limitations.

I don't believe in music that we create only for the sake of commercial success—you have to be genuine at some point.

But if you create the music you hear without thinking too much about the outcome, then the result may be a commercial success.

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