

LA DISPARITION DU SOL

Conférence spectacle

PROTAGONISTS :

Etienne Dambrine : Soil science, Forest biogeochemistry, lake ecology.
INRAE-University Savoie-Mont Blanc.

Olivier Masson : Musician, saxophones and sound device

GENESIS :

Etienne Dambrine is a soil scientist, research director at INRAE and Professor of Ecology at Savoie-Mont Blanc University . During the initial contact, he said: "I'm in the field, trying to understand why the soil has disappeared in certain places!". Olivier Masson then suggested to use the homophony with the note "sol" (G) in this project. It quickly became clear that they would both avoid any anxiety-inducing approach to the subject and that the notion of pleasure would guide their collaboration.



Contact : Olivier MASSON - L'OISIVERAIE, 60, Le Village 38140 Saint Paul d'Izeaux - France
Mobile / What'sApp : 33 (0)6 81 76 59 39 - E-mail: oisiveraie@oisiveraie.com



Le sol est sous nos pieds, il ancre nos
forêts, fournit l'argile de nos pots,
nourrit nos jardins, sollicite nos sillons,
ordonne nos paysages, construit nos
mythes fondateurs.

On connaît des endroits où le sol a
disparu, soit parce que la mer ou les
lacs l'ont noyé, soit parce que le vent
l'a emporté, soit parce que le ruisselle-
ment l'a érodé, transporté, sédimenté.

Pourtant, Le sol, tout le monde s'en fout...
Ca salit les godasses, on y voit rien,
Alors on bétonne, on draine, on stérilise.
Et sur quoi on cultivera les topinambours
à la prochaine ?
Alors pour faire comprendre, on l'a fait
disparaître, le sol.

Soil is a scarce and non-renewable resource which is vital to ensure life on Earth

In fact, living soils are needed to maintain the key soil functions: Food and biomass production, Environmental Interaction, Biological habitat and gene pool. Soil is also a source of raw material a cultural heritage and a Platform for man-made structures. Technical management methods of soils allowing the preservation of soil key functions are known or in development. What is critically lacking is the awareness of soil preservation for the general public and among stakeholders.

One way to raise this awareness is to touch the heart of people with art-featuring representations of soils/soil functions. Quite often, we realize how important is something or someone, when we lack it; when he, she, or it is gone away.

The body of our work is to develop a picture of how the world would be without soils. Our aim is not to frighten people, but to illustrate this loss, from a poetic and musical point of view, playing with the homophony between the soils (in French sol), and the G note (in French sol).

Yet, we begin our performance by describing where and when did the soil disappear, in the world and in the past, with a set of illustrations. Below water reservoirs, along deserts, or as a result of climate change and human activity. Then we walk along the different soil functions, illustrating what we would lose, very practically, if soils were to vanish. Then we come to the relations between soil constituents and soil functions. This is based on classical Soil Science, but illustrated in a way that puts aside the traditional university courses and imparts excitement. Finally, using the homophony between Sol and sol, we transpose the loss of soil into musical consequences.
Etienne Dambrine

This conference-show talks about the soil, its components, its properties, and the services it provides, but avoids the traditional academic approach. The aim is to make soil tangible and audible. To show its traces in our cultures, our passions and our myths. To explain its fragility and resilience. And to show how deeply rooted our civilisation is in the soil.

We produced a video of a full recording made by the Université Savoie Mont-Blanc in Chambéry on Tuesday, February 11, 2025 > on request.

To view the teaser... go to: <https://vimeo.com/1061263460>

Since then, we added a section discussing the time it took to create the soil... and the time it takes to endanger it ; as well as its importance in the evolution of human society, including the first evidence of writing on clay tablets. The show now lasts 40/45 minutes.

The music complements Etienne Dambrine's message. Melodic themes played on the saxophone alternate with abstract sound materials. The natural "song" of Etienne Dambrine's speaking voice is sometimes played upon, emphasizing a repeated phrase or evoking another voice, another way of accessing a conversation with the incongruous.

A short melody introduces an intense chapter, during which sounds punctuate and then carry the duo into a surge of events in sync with the words, which become cries; the projected images, like scars of history. A litany is played in duet, rhythmic, somehow playful, never anxiety-inducing but with eyes wide open. The question of the soil's composition and its creation rubs shoulders with sounds that one might say are invented.

A nursery rhyme known to everyone, all generations combined, closes the encounter.

We are here, together. We can talk about it...

