The **GUITAR MONKEYS** were conceived for the Berlin Atonal Festival (1986), a series of punk and avant-garde rock concerts. Ten performers with little or no experience with playing guitars wore black leather vests with loudspeakers mounted on the lower back section and an amplifier in the inside pocket into which one could plug an electric guitar or a microphone. In some cases , for extra volume, we did away with the leather vests and simply strapped large loudspeaker boxes onto our backs like backpacks . Each member of this "rock band" could individually amplify his or her instrument without having to be on stage. Most of the time we played in the middle of the audience or in stairwells, hallways, or other niches particular to the space. (Men and Ladies' rooms have unique acoustic qualities.) The Guitar Monkeys were basically a noise and feedback band -- and an intense one at that -- imagine not just one loudspeaker giving off feedback, but ten at once (from below, above, and around you). We purchased our guitars at the local Berlin flea market with a budget limit of 10 $ per instrument. Instead of standard contact microphones, we used cheap Piezo ceramic loudspeakers as pick-ups. Even after the Atonal Festival, the Guitar Monkeys stayed busy in local underground clubs and went on tour (one critic dubbed us the "grandchildren of Jimi Hendrix" and described the music as "post-industrial punk").

The Guitar Monkeys marks an important step in the development of Audio Uniforms because it made the performers personally responsible for their sounds, while previous Uniforms only permitted them to play prerecorded cassettes. It was during the Guitar Monkeys European tour of 1989 that I happened to meet the director of l'Aeronef in Lille who asked me to design a new Uniform for the festival Les Arts au Soleil ("Arts in the Sun") which was going to take place on the beaches of northern France. This is how the Audio Ballerinas came into existence (see AUDIO BALLERINAS brochure).