Meet the Artists

in an amazing first ever fusion of spoken word/rap big band Latin jazz tribute to the Father of Afro-Cuban jazz Mario Bauzá and award winning vocalist Chareneë Wade in an incredible new treatment of “Over The Rainbow.” MULTIVERSE has been praised by critics for its incredible multi-dimensional vision bringing the big band into and beyond the 21st century. It has been recently nominated in two Grammy Award categories for Best Latin Jazz Recording and Best Instrumental Arrangement (“Afro-Cuban Jazz Suite for Ellington”), giving Bobby a total of seven nominations for the coveted award.

DORTHAAN KIRK

Dorthaan Kirk was born and raised in Houston, Texas. After graduating from high school, she moved to Los Angeles where she attended Los Angeles Community College (LACC) and where she met and married her first husband, Leonard Harper. From that marriage she bore three beautiful daughters.

Mrs. Kirk (“D.K.” as she is referred to by most of her friends) has over 30 years’ experience in project management related to institutional development, public relations, music publishing and artists’ management development. The widow of the late saxophonist Rahsaan Roland Kirk, Dorthaan managed his career from 1970 until his death in 1977. In this capacity, she negotiated recording contracts, publishing and performing rights, handled public relations and concert promotions, and developed key relationships within the music industry. Dorthaan continues to manage her late husband’s image and music, and is the administrator of his music publishing company.

Because of her background in jazz, her close relationships in the jazz world, and her professionalism, Dorthaan was asked to join WBGO Jazz 88.3FM, along with Robert Ottenhoff, as one of its founders in 1978. As WBGO’s Director of Community Relations & Special Events, her duties range from producing and promoting concerts in various venues throughout New York and New Jersey, to representing the radio station in civil forums. One of the largest special events she manages annually is the WBGO Jazz-a-thon. She also schedules all on-air interviews, ticket giveaways and promotions at area jazz venues, and generates the music and the public service calendar. As coordinator of the WBGO Children’s Jazz Series, Dorthaan books the artists, secures venues for the series and acquires complimentary gifts for children in attendance.

Sister Kirk joined Bethany Baptist Church in 1992. As a loving and dedicated member, Dorthaan has been the driving force behind Bethany’s Jazz Vespers Committee. Under her guidance, this worship service has grown considerably over the last nine years. In addition to serving as Chairperson of the Jazz Vespers Committee, Dorthaan is secretary of the Lecture Committee, and a member of the Black History Committee.

Dorthaan Kirk is truly devoted to her family. She is the loving mother of the late Sabrina Mitchell, Yolunda Harper and April Harper; devoted grandmother of Canda, Iris, Tony, Jamal and Jeremy; dear sister of Charlotte and Murray Williams, and the late Charles and Clarence Williams; and devoted aunt to LaShan and Cervantz.
Bobby Sanabria—

Drummer, percussionist, arranger, composer, producer, recording artist, filmmaker, conductor, educator, activist, multi-cultural warrior and multiple Grammy nominee—has performed with a veritable Who’s Who in the world of jazz and Latin music, as well as with his own critically acclaimed ensembles. His diverse recording and performing experience includes work with such legendary figures as Dizzy Gillespie, Tito Puente, Paquito D’Rivera, Charles McPherson, Mongo Santamaria, Ray Barretto, Marco Rizo, Arturo Sandoval, Roswell Rudd, Chico O’Farrill, Candido, Yomo Toro, Francisco Aguabella, Larry Harlow, Henry Threadgill, and the Godfather of Afro-Cuban Jazz, Mario Bauzá.

Bobby, the son of Puerto Rican parents, was born and raised in the “Fort Apache” section of New York City’s South Bronx. Inspired and encouraged by maestro Tito Puente, another fellow New York-born Puerto Rican, Bobby “got serious” and attended Boston’s Berklee College of Music from 1975 to 1979, obtaining a Bachelor of Music degree and receiving their prestigious Faculty Association Award for his work as an instrumentalist. Since his graduation, Bobby has become a leader in the Afro-Cuban, Brazilian and jazz fields as both a drummer and percussionist, and is recognized as one of the most articulate musician-scholars of la tradición living today.

He has been featured on numerous Grammy-nominated albums, including The Mambo Kings and other movie soundtracks, as well as numerous television and radio work. Mr. Sanabria was the drummer with the legendary “Father of the Afro-Cuban Jazz movement,” Mario Bauzá’s Afro-Cuban Jazz Orchestra. With them he recorded three CDs (two of which were Grammy*-nominated) which are considered to be definitive works of the Afro-Cuban big-band jazz tradition. Mr. Sanabria was also featured with the orchestra in two PBS documentaries about Bauzá and also appeared on the Bill Cosby show performing with the orchestra. He also appeared and performed prominently in a PBS documentary on the life of Mongo Santamaria and on camera in the CBS television movie, Ricin: Bounty Hunter.

Bobby and his Quarteto Aché toured Armenia in June of 2007 having been personally invited by the President of Armenia and the US Embassy to represent the United States in a series of concerts. Headlining in the final event, The Cascade Jazz Festival in Yerevan, Armenia’s capital, the group received a thunderous ovation from the estimated 8,000 person audience which was broadcast throughout the country. His group has the unique distinction and honor of being the first ensemble ever to perform Latino oriented jazz in this country and spread clave consciousness in a unique master class that he held at the Yerevan Conservatory.

Bobby has been the recipient of many awards, including an NEA grant as a jazz performer, various Meet the Composer awards, two INTAR Off-Broadway Composer awards, and on several occasions the Mid-Atlantic Foundation Arts Connect Grant. In 2003 he was presented with the “Outstanding Lifetime Achievement Award” by Ivan Acosta of Latin Jazz USA, in recognition of Bobby’s extraordinary creative contributions to Latin jazz. Bobby was voted “Percussionist of the Year” for 2005 by the readers of DRUM! Magazine, a worldwide publication devoted to drums and percussion. His three part video instructional series, “Getting Started on Congas,” originally released by DCI way back in 1995, now available through Alfred Music, set an industry standard by which all other instructional percussion videos must be judged.

In 2006 Mr. Sanabria was inducted into the Bronx Walk of Fame having a permanent street named after him on the Bronx’s famed Grand Concourse in recognition for his contributions to music and the arts. Mr. Sanabria has been awarded the 2008 Lifetime Achievement Award by KOSA for his outstanding accomplishments in jazz and Latin music both as a performer and educator and the 2008 Martin Luther King Jr. Mentor Award presented to him by the Manhattan Country School for his work in the world of jazz. In 2011 the Jazz Journalist Association named him Percussionist of the Year.

As an activist he has long been a champion for the recognition of Latin jazz as a legitimate art form and its proper place of recognition in the history of the jazz continuum. In 2006 he spearheaded the campaign to restore the Latin Jazz Cruise, a weekly 2-hour radio program on Jazz 88 WBGU FM in Newark, NJ, after it was suddenly taken off the air without an explanation. Organizing politicians like New York Congressman José Serrano and Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez as well as fellow musicians and fans of the music, the show was successfully brought back on the air. The result has been that the station has also made Latin jazz an integral part of all of its regular day to day programming, thus expanding the audience for the genre as well as jazz in general. In April 2011 when NARAS, the governing body of the Grammy Awards, summarily cut 31 categories, including Latin jazz, from the awards process with no stated reason or any input from the 21,000 membership, Mr. Sanabria spearheaded a campaign uniting well known musicians from both the west and east coasts. It also involved the general public and internationally known personalities like Paul Simon, Bonnie Raitt, Herbie Hancock, Carlos Santana, Jessie Jackson and Dr. Cornell West, as well as national Latino organizations like Presente, National Institute of Latino Policy, National Hispanic Media Coalition, National Hispanic Foundation for the Arts, several unions and others against this injustice. A subsequent law suit filed by Mr. Sanabria and fellow plaintiffs Eugene Marlow, Ben Lapidus and Mark Levine in New York State Supreme Court finally pressured NARAS into reinstating the category this year. For his role as an activist and his efforts in restoring the category to the Grammys Bobby has received the BORIMIX Award from the Society of the Educational Arts and the prestigious Puerto Rican Heritage Award from Comite Noviembre, the leading Puerto Rican organization in the country.

On April 30, 2012, Bobby appeared with his Quarteto Ache’ and special guests Candido and Sheila E. as part of the first Annual UNESCO International Day of Jazz. The inaugural event—organized by the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in partnership with the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz, which Herbie Hancock chairs—including star-studded concerts in Paris, New Orleans and New York as well as jazz-related events in several dozen countries from Algeria to Uruguay. The New York City concert, for which Bobby was selected to represent the Latin branch of jazz, was broadcast worldwide from the U.N. and featured such luminaries as Tony Bennett, George Duke, Jimmy Heath, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Esperanza Spalding, Christian McBride and many more. The event was hosted by Quincy Jones, Robert DeNiro and Morgan Freeman. Bobby’s dynamic appearance received the only standing ovation of the evening.

His current big band CD, released in August of 2012 on the Jazzheads label, is entitled MULTIVERSE. Inspired by the writings of Mexican author Octavio Paz and the current scientific theories of multiple universes, it blurs the boundaries between jazz, Latin, funk, rock, R&B, gospel, the avant garde and even rap. Featured are spoken word artist La Bruja.