

WILLIAM CEPEDA BIO

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Jazz Artist – Innovator – Composer – Trombone – Conch Shells -- Producer

Known as a cultural icon of Puerto Rico, Grammy-nominated artist and composer William Cepeda (williamcepeda.com) revolutionized the field of Latin music in 1992 with his introduction of Afro-Rican Jazz, an innovative blend of world music, progressive jazz and traditional Afro-Puerto Rican roots and folk music and dance. His ensemble has toured internationally performing in jazz festivals such as the Montreux, NorthSea and Tabarka, as well as in performing arts venues and clubs all over the world.

Born and raised in Loiza, the heart of “little Africa” in Puerto Rico, William Cepeda’s artistic excellence as a composer and artistic visionary, his authenticity and advocacy for rigorous research and comprehensive documentation of Puerto Rican music, dance and culture have earned him multiple awards, grants and recognition from the Institute of Puerto Rican Arts & Culture, Meet The Composer, the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Music Fund at Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors, American Composers Orchestra, American Composers Forum and the Association of Hispanic Arts.

A protégé of Dizzie Gillespie, William Cepeda was a member of his United Nation Orchestra, and Cepeda’s musical influences include artists such as Miriam Makeba and Lester Bowie. Always fresh and exciting, Afro-Rican Jazz never ceases to surprise and delight with William Cepeda’s unusual combinations, mixing new and different literary & musical artforms with traditional small jazz ensemble instrumentation.

In addition to world music and jazz, William Cepeda’s oeuvre includes contemporary classical music with his introduction of *Bomba Sinfonica*, a full-length orchestral work for symphony, opera, choir and soloists published by Albany Records.

William Cepeda created Casabe Records (casaberecords.com) in 1997 in order to celebrate and document Puerto Rican music as well as professionally record and produce legendary Puerto Rican folk artists and ensembles such as Los Hermanos Ayala, Don Felix Alduen. Angel Luis Torruella, and Grupo Esencia. In addition his own productions have been released on the Blue Jackel label – Grupo Afro-Boricua (“Bombazo”) and William Cepeda Afro-Rican Jazz (“My Roots & Beyond” and “Branching Out”). William Cepeda Afro-Jazz, ***produce with casabe records Live at Montreux Jazz Festival –and*** William Cepeda International Quintet, ***Únete*** – Casabe Records.

Educated at the Berklee College of Music in Boston, the Conservatory of Music in Puerto Rico, and the Aaron Copland School of Music at Queens College, William Cepeda has two bachelor of arts degrees (one in jazz composition and arranging and one in music education) and a masters degree in jazz performance. As a composer and educator, William has received several prestigious artist-in-residency awards including the 2002 Meet the Composer three-year New Residencies Program award and more recently at the Akiyoshidai International Art Village in Japan in 2009.