

CALJE

Chicago Afro-Latin Jazz Ensemble

Wednesday, October 21, 2015

Gorell Recital Hall, John Sutton Hall

Victor Garcia, trumpet
Darwin Noguera, piano
Ivan Renta, saxophone
Joshua Ramos, bass
Juan Pastor, percussion

*Program copy has been provided,
unedited, by the artists.*

CALJE: Chicago Afro-Latin Jazz Ensemble is regarded as the new and innovative force on the Latin Jazz scene. With a global sound and ensemble, this band represents Afro-Cuban Jazz, as well as music from all of Latin America. They incorporate traditional Cuban rhythms such as son, guaguanco, and clave negra with modern Jazz harmony. Through this fusion concept, they have explored writing new music based on Argentinian Tango, Dominican Merengue, Puerto Rican Bomba y Plena, Spanish Flamenco and Jamaican Reggae. CALJE delivers captivating performances and high energy in the form of dance grooves. The music is primarily written by co-leaders trumpeter Victor Garcia and pianist Darwin Noguera. This group performs as small as a duo, to a 15 piece orchestra. CALJE has performed and recorded with artists such as Grammy winners Howard Levy from the Bela Fleck Group and Brian Lynch from the Eddie Palmieri group, master percussionist Paoli

Mejias and legendary trombonist Steve Turre. They have also given performances and clinics across the midwest and in three cities in the country of Nicaragua. Their debut album "Blueprints" was critically acclaimed, receiving 3 ½ stars from *Downbeat Magazine*, as well as other media outlets across the US and abroad.

CALJE made its debut by kicking off the "Jazz en Clave" Latin Jazz Festival at the famed Hothouse, alongside international artists such as multi-Grammy winning artist Eddie Palmieri & Dafnis Prieto's Quintet. Musicians in this band have had the opportunity to share the stage with powerhouse artists such as Tito Puente, Danilo Perez, Paquito D'Rivera, Celia Cruz, Chick Corea, and many others. "This 15-piece band, playing before a standing-room only crowd at this international music venue, left everyone gasping and wanting more sounds after their near two hour, flawless set." - *Jazz Chicago*

Founded in 2006 by Nicaraguan pianist/composer, Darwin Noguera & Mexican trumpeter/composer Victor Garcia, these long-time musical collaborators envisioned an endeavor Latin music that would follow in the innovative footsteps of the pioneering Cuban groups Chucho Valde's Irakere, Mario Bauza & His Afro-Cubans, & the Dizzy Gillespie United Nations Orchestra. This dynamic group is continuing the dance and listening legacy in the Latin Jazz genre.

CALJE is involved in educational presentations, varying from elementary to college age students. In a musical and historical interactive environment, they expose students to the diverse repertoire of Latin America, making learning a fun and insightful experience.

Victor Garcia, trumpet

Victor Garcia has been performing with his group, CALJE, and freelancing in Chicago and beyond for the past 10 years. He has had the opportunity to play with a multitude of artists from a wide variety of genres, such as Aretha Franklin, Arturo Sandoval, Spoon, Victor Manuelle, Nicholas Payton, La India, the Temptations, Steve Turre, Tito Puente, Jr., Paquito d’Rivera, and countless others. His travels have taken him to Europe, Central America, and South America. In addition, he has recorded dozens of albums, two of which garnered Grammy nominations in 2005 (Angel Melendez & the 911 Mambo Orchestra) and 2008 (Sones de Mexico), and one which was nominated for a Latin Grammy in 2007 (Sones de Mexico). Victor also maintains a busy teaching schedule at the Music Institute of Chicago, Merit School of Music, Loyola University and at Roosevelt University.

Darwin Noguera, piano

Darwin Noguera is a Nicaraguan pianist, band leader and composer based in New York. He is considered one of the young masters of his generation and is known for his integration between jazz, classical, & Latin rhythms. He is currently pursuing a Master’s Degree in Jazz Performance at the Manhattan School of Music. He is the co-founder and composer for the Chicago Afro-Latin Jazz Ensemble (CALJE) and has formed a new trio in New York, focused on developing a language between the classical and jazz genres. Darwin has released two albums under the Chicago Sessions label. The first, titled “The Gardner” with his Evolution Quintet, and the second “Blueprints” with the Chicago Afro-Latin Jazz Ensemble. Both albums received notable press and reviews in local and national media outlets. He has performed with artists such as Paquito D’Rivera, Steve Turre, Brian Lynch, Paoli Mejias, and Howard Levy and often collabo-



rates and plays with local musicians in Chicago and New York. His groups regularly take part in Chicago-area festivals, the most noted performance being Millennium Park’s “Made in Chicago: World Class Jazz Series” and the Chicago Jazz Festival. Most recently they have performed at the Green Mill and the Hyde Park Jazz Festival in Chicago. He also forms part of the Grammy-nominated Manhattan School of Music Afro-Cuban Jazz Orchestra, directed by Bobby Sanabria.

Darwin and Victor often perform as a duo. Intense interaction, sophisticated writing and heavy on improvisation. Victor plays the trumpet, sings bass and plays percussion, while Darwin plays the piano, left hand bass and cowbell on his left foot. They emanate a playful interaction of call and response, encouraging participation from the audience by requesting songs from the American Songbook. The vibe is enchanting, along

the lines of Chick Corea and Bobby McFerrin. Their repertoire is vast, as it includes not only Afro-Cuban classics, but their own works written specifically for Piano and Trumpet. The duo really sounds like a trio.

Joshua Ramos, bass

Joshua Ramos is a fixture in the national music scene and a graduate of Northern Illinois University. He is currently playing with the Ramsey Lewis trio and has recorded an album and a live DVD with Ramsey. Joshua has toured all over Europe, Asia and the world and recorded, performed, and had the honor of sharing the stage with the likes of The Occidental Brothers, Wynton Marsalis, Willie Pickens, Conrad Herwig and many others.

Juan Pastor, percussion

As a percussionist, drummer and music educator, Juan Pastor has been establishing his voice on the Chicago percussion scene. Originally from Lima, Peru, he has mastered many different musical genres such as jazz, Latin, funk and South American music. Juan has toured throughout the eastern United States, Central America and Europe. Juan

earned his Bachelor's Degree of Music at Northern Illinois University, and his Master's Degree in Music at DePaul University.

Ivan Renta, saxophone

Born in Ponce, Puerto Rico and raised in Coamo, Puerto Rico, Ivan Renta has become one of the premiere saxophonists in the Jazz, Latin Jazz and Latin Music Industry. His ability to adapt to any musical situation has landed him on stage at many of the world's most prestigious venues and music festivals. His credentials include performances with artist such as Tito Puente, Wynton Marsalis, Eddie Palmieri, Willie Colon, Ron Carter, Marc Anthony, Jennifer Lopez, Jimmy Heath, Ray Barretto, The Vanguard Jazz Orchestra and Bebo Valdez, to name a few. Mr. Renta has collaborated on three Grammy Award winning recordings. Mr. Renta is also an active Music Educator and Clinician.

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Represented by Tiffany L. Goodman
Goodman Artists
773.283.2830
tiffany@goodmanartists.com
www.goodmanartists.com

