

WILLIAM CEPEDA BIO (SHORT)

Jazz Artist, Innovator, Composer, Trombonist, Conch Shells, Educator, Producer

Known as a cultural icon of Puerto Rico and a four-time Grammy nominee and composer, William Cepeda was born and raised in Loiza, the heart of Puerto Rico's "Little Africa." His artistic excellence, authenticity, and advocacy for research and comprehensive documentation of Puerto Rican music, dance and culture have earned him multiple awards, grants, and recognition.

In 1992, he revolutionized Latin music with the introduction of Afro-Rican Jazz, an innovative blend of traditional Puerto Rican roots, folk, dance, progressive jazz, and world music. He is widely credited with innovating and creating the jazz sub-genre: Afro-Rican Jazz.

Cepeda's musical influences include Dizzy Gillespie, Miriam Makeba, Miles Davis, Fela Kuti, and Lester Bowie among others.

His ensemble has toured the world and performed at such prestigious jazz festivals as Montreux, North Sea, and Tabarka and performing arts venues and clubs.

A protégé of the Dizzy Gillespie, Cepeda was a member of the United Nations Orchestra. Also, he has traveled the world and performed with many jazz artists, such as Lester Bowie and his Brass Fantasy, David Murray, James Moody, Steve Turre, Bobby Watson, Miriam Makeba, and Slide Hampton & the Jazz Masters.

Also, he is equally known in the Latin music scene and has performed with such legendary figures as Tito Puente, Paquito D'Rivera, Arturo Sandoval, Eddie Palmieri, Celia Cruz, Marc Anthony, Ruben Blades, and Oscar de Leon.

In addition to his jazz and world music repertoire, Cepeda's oeuvre includes Bomba Sinfonica, a full-length orchestral work for a symphony, opera, choir, and soloists.

In 2013, Cepeda was bestowed an Honorary Doctorate from the Berklee College of Music. The same year the Puerto Rico Heineken Jazz Festival was dedicated in his honor.

Cepeda continues to compose, develop new projects and seek new opportunities.

