

PAOLI MEJIAS

Performing for more than 20 years, Grammy nominee Paoli Mejias has already distinguished himself as a young master percussionist and is ranked among the best in both salsa and Latin jazz. Paoli is now at the vanguard of Latin jazz as leader of his own Quintet with three successful CDs as band leader: "JAZZAMBIA" (2008), "Transcend" (2006) and "Mi Tambor" (2004) which received a Grammy Award nomination for Best Latin Jazz Album.



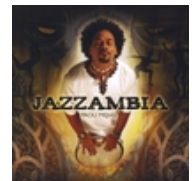
Born March 7, 1970 in Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico, percussionist Paoli Mejias' rise to Latin jazz fame is a story of sweat and dedication. Completely self taught, Paoli purchased his first set of congas at age twelve, inspired by records of conga great Carlos "Potato" Valdes and Latin jazz innovators Batacumbele and Irakere. Learning by imitating the sounds he heard on the records, Paoli taught himself the language of the congas without the benefit of an instructor. By his mid-to-late teens, he could be found at jam sessions in the streets and on the beaches of San Juan. He earned invitations from bandleaders like Rafú Warner, José Noguerras, Glen Monroig and Charlie Sepúlveda. As he worked his way up the live music food chain in Puerto Rico, Paoli found himself performing alongside the Latin jazz legends who had inspired him in his early years.



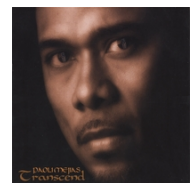
Paoli's résumé includes top jazz and salsa artists like Tito Puente, Dave Samuels, Dave Valentin, Paquito d'Rivera, Chick Corea, David Sánchez and Danilo Pérez, who all have called on Paoli for his unique blend of melodic sensitivity and blinding technique. As Puerto Rico's first-call conguero, Paoli has performed and recorded with artists like Luis Enrique, Marc Anthony, La India, Tito Puente, Seis del Solar, & Eddie Palmieri with whom he toured the largest jazz festivals for more than a decade. Paoli's discography as side-man includes more than 20 commercial recordings, among them Grammy nominated "Acuarela de Tambores" by Alex Acuña, and Grammy Award winner "Masterpiece" by Eddie Palmieri and Tito Puente.

Paoli made his successful debut as a bandleader in 2004 with his self-produced record "Mi Tambor" which received a Latin Grammy nomination for Best Latin Jazz Album in 2005. Showered with positive press and accolades from the worldwide jazz community, Paoli's transition from sideman to focal point was explosive. His 2006 follow-up release "Transcend" features some of the New York Latin jazz scene's finest: Luis Perdomo, Miguel Zenón, Jaleel Shaw, Hans Glawischnig, Antonio Sánchez, all of whom also recorded on his 3rd CD "JAZZAMBIA" released in November of 2008.

"Latin bandleaders these days are making music that becomes simultaneously more modern and more ancient. "Jazzambia," by the Puerto Rican percussionist Paoli Mejias, is the latest proof. It includes several other like-minded musicians, including the pianist Luis Perdomo and the saxophonist Miguel Zenón, and it's exciting to see where it goes." - **NEW YORK TIMES**



"It's his work as a leader that best reflects the importance of Mejias as a force within and beyond Latin music." - **DRUM! MAGAZINE**



"This exceptional session [Transcend] is his follow-up effort to his 2005 Latin Grammy nominated release Mi Tambor, and it exceeds all expectations" - **JAZZIZ**

"Paoli Mejias transcends the conventions of mainstream jazz, creating a rich tapestry of original, Latin-flavored, improvisational music" - **JAZZ IMPROV**

"Transcending Expectations" - **DOWNBEAT**

"Puerto Rican percussion ace Paoli Mejias' self-produced album "Mi Tambor" is a dynamic fusion of progressive salsa, forward-thinking Latin jazz, and folkloric elements..." **JAZZIZ**



Consistently, each and every review acclaims his ability to fill a venue with his charisma and energetic Afro-Caribbean rhythms bringing the public to their feet. Complimented by the best jazz musicians, Paoli's Quintet is creating a new style of Latin jazz that goes above and beyond the genre in the traditional sense, incorporating unexpected elements of Asian, Greek, Flamenco, and African influences. The result is intriguing and exhilarating; the public becomes enveloped in the tight ensemble's passion for music that is a delight to hear, and remarkable to witness in a live setting.

An experienced clinician, Paoli has given master classes at the University of Washington, the Music Conservatory of Puerto Rico, Cal State University, and "El Batey" the Puerto Rican Cultural Center of Chicago, The World Percussion Festival in Seattle, FITA (Festival Internacional de Tradiciones AfroAmericanas) and the Montreal Percussion Festival, among others.

Paoli endorses Latin Percussion (congas & percussion), Sabian (cymbals), Remo (drum heads), Vater (drum sticks), and Hansenfutz (practice pedal).

