

FINIENDO UN-DUE

JOSCAN JACOZO

DAROL
MENDER

OTONIEL
NICOLAS





Like an ancient ruin, musical history is often obscured beneath layers of indifference and ignorance. Where archeologists brush away dirt to reveal and study the past, musicians like pianist Josean Jacobo create albums like *Herencia Criolla* (Creole Heritage) - a radiant new work exploring the cultural artifacts that have shaped the roots of Afro-Dominican Jazz.

Balancing the musical heritage of *Merengue de Palo Echao*, *Bachata*, and *Gagá* with contemporary Jazz and the work of legendary Latin composers, *Herencia Criolla* deepens the musical dialectic on the enduring ingenuity of Dominican music. Cinematic, anthropological, a chronicle of the heritage that sustains him,

Herencia Criolla flows from field recordings to vivid compositions featuring Jacobo's trio, drummer Otoniel Nicolas and bassist Daroll Méndez, with guest appearances by alto saxophonist Miguel Zenón, bassist Ramón Vázquez and percussionists Magic Mejia and Félix García.

Transforming *sarandunga* style rhythms into an elegant Jazz standard, the title track is inspired by the annual devotion to Saint John the Baptist in coastal town of Balí. Built from the Creole custom of worshipping a Catholic saint through African rhythms, Jacobo's *San Miguel* grooves to the beloved pulse of the Dominican *palo* beat. Somber, uplifting, gracefully gliding over the mournful *Palo de Muerto* cadence used in "*La Dolorita*" (Virgin Mary) celebrations, Jacobo's *Dolorita* drifts between wistful and spell binding.



Changing pace, Jacobo transforms Monchy & Alexandra's *bachata* hit *Dos Locos*, into the perfect platform for the grace and angular intensity of alto saxophonist Miguel Zenón. Bassist Ramón Vázquez's rich tone anchors Jacobo's spirited adaptation of *Bachata Rosa*, the bittersweet ballad by Dominican pop star Juan Luis Guerra.

Deftly navigating the complicated dynamics of José Antonio Abreu's *Caña Brava* Jacobo seamlessly blends Jazz with the sanctity of "*pri pri*," a Dominican variation of the merengue. With *Batey*, another Jacobo original, Méndez's bass line simulates a *gaga* beat with percussionists Magic Mejia and Félix Garcia sprinkling texture

along the way. Ending with Rafael Hernández's upbeat *Quisqueya*, the indigenous Taino name for the island, the trio soars through this anthem with more help from Félix Garcia.

Representing *Quisqueya* on stages the world over, Josean Jacobo continues to educate audiences on the impact Caribbean culture has on Jazz. *Herencia Criolla*, Jacobo's latest archeological expedition, invites us to de-colonize our musical mindset, honoring the complex diversity of musical influences that have forged Jazz into one of the most vibrant and influential art forms on earth.

Michael Ambrosino writes about music and culture and produces a series of Jazz programs on 33third.org.

