



The Rodriguez Brothers

Reunited

Live at Dizzy's Club



celebrating the 20th anniversary of their first recording *Introducing the Rodriguez Brothers*, Rob and Mike Rodriguez present *Reunited*, a spirited new album captured live at Jazz at Lincoln Center's Dizzy's Club in New York City. Produced by RodBros Music, **Reunited** highlights seven original compositions that define the Rodriguez Brothers dynamic approach towards fusing Afro-Cuban, Brazilian, and Latin folkloric traditions with contemporary jazz. Featuring bassist Ricky Rodriguez, drummer Adam Cruz and multi-percussionist Anthony Almonte, along with Rob on piano and Mike on trumpet, **Reunited** perfectly captures the effervescent nature of a band defined by ingenuity, perseverance and brotherly love.

Veterans of New York City's Jazz scene, Rob and Mike Rodriguez have collaborated with some of the most celebrated musicians in jazz including Roy Haynes, Ray Barretto, Chick Corea, Charlie Haden, Eddie Palmieri, Arturo Sandoval, Paquito D'Rivera, David Sanchez, Wynton Marsalis, Joe Locke, Carla Bley, Gonzalo Rubalcaba, and Maria Schneider. Focusing on breathing new life into compositions that have defined their work together, the concept for the album came from the unplanned hiatus caused by the global pandemic, and the ensuing desire to observe the anniversary by sharing the unique chemistry of the band with a live audience.

For Mike, that chemistry comes from "being siblings for all these years and the trust and musicianship that each of us brings to the group." Given the shared ritual of finishing each other's

musical sentences, Rob agrees, adding “there’s no way to describe it but it’s certainly embedded in the metadata of our music.” Steeped in Cuban culture, straddling grooves emanating from the musical traditions of boleros, cumbia rhythms and the cha-cha-cha, the brothers continue to find sophisticated ways to “fuse a Latin aesthetic within jazz elements to stretch and pull the listener’s ear and take them on a musical journey.” Inspired in their formative years by the contemporary work of Danilo Perez, David Sanchez, Ed Simon, Chick Corea and Gonzalo Rubalcaba, the brothers also lean heavily on music their Cuban father shared while working for a Miami based record label. As Rob remembers, “we grew up listening to Paquito DiRivera, Chucho Valdez, Irakere, Arturo Sandoval - the cats from Cuba, the older Cuban big bands, and all the Cuban folkloric music.”

Classically trained in percussion and piano, Rob continues to be influenced by the grooves his drummer father has cultivated through his career, noting that “it all comes from rhythm in terms of my compositional process.” For Mike, the trumpet has always been a vehicle for lyrical story-telling, “I wanna move mountains when I play. Not with flashy technique but with a style that moves people and pulls on their heartstrings.” You can feel those mountains swaying as Reunited unfolds with signature songs that electrified the group’s live concert at Dizzy’s.

Titled after the nickname of their percussive father, *Gitmo’s Groove* finds Rob channeling a “nasty Afro-Cuban songo” beat shared during a family jam session. Odd meters flow “organically” as the song artfully explores the mosaic of influences that shape the band’s signature sound. *Guayaquil* pays homage to their mother’s homeland of Guayaquil, Ecuador. Experimenting with a Columbia cumbia rhythm which remains popular in Ecuador, Rob composed the song shaped by memories of how “mom would dance to cumbia music at parties and so I started thinking about her.”

Excited by the purchase of an iRig digital control pad, Mike found himself bumping into what would be the bass line for the delightfully rollicking Impromptu. Lyrically, the song slaloms through chord changes Mike crafted as “elements of surprise,” while rhythmically it’s propelled by an amped up “clave with an edge.” Functioning around the ubiquitous groove of the “C7 vibe,” that so many jam sessions thrive on, *Descarnation* epitomizes the “Spanglish” nature of hybridizing Latin artistry with jazz. Ever the artist, Mike utilizes the blues and cha-cha-cha to “add colors” to the composition.

Love Samba finds Rob channeling his inner Antônio Carlos Jobim with all the harmonics and melodic elegance indicative of this treasured Brazilian musical tradition. Written in the early morning hours after a late night jam session, Rob describes *Lulu’s Song* (a tribute to their mother) as “a song that kind of wrote itself.” This lovely ballad provides more than enough space for gorgeous solos by both brothers. Angular and inquisitive, *Minor Things* strikes the perfect balance between honoring tradition and the unique ingenuity The Rodriguez Brothers bring to Latin jazz. Ending on a high note, the brothers use the montuno section to creatively tease apart the melodic and rhythmic structure of the song.

Whether you need food for your brain, passion for your soul or just the right grooves to glide to the dance floor, **Reunited** is a powerful reminder of the intelligence, craft, and rejuvenating spirit The Rodriguez Brothers pack into every note of music they create.