



& THE VODOU DRUMS of HAITI

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BONGA GASTON JEAN-BAPTISTE (Haitian drums; kalimba)

Driving the Vodou Drums of Haiti is percussionist “Bonga” Gaston Jean-Baptiste and his mastery of the intricate Afro-Haitian rhythms derived from the Dahomey, Kongo and Ibo. Regarded as a master of the Haitian drum, Bonga has been studying since the age of seven. He has an extensive repertoire of Vodou rhythms and coveted techniques. An houngan, session player, accompanist and educator, he is also an expert drum craftsman. As a core member of the acclaimed outfits Boukman Eksperyans and Foulà, Bonga was invited to the U.S. in the early '90s. He continues to play solo and in ensemble. His drums opened the NY premiere of the Rolling Stones “Voodoo Lounge” tour and are prominently featured on recordings by Wyclef Jean and Salif Keita. Bonga has also been a featured performer with Grace Jones, Dan Zanes and Urban Tap. www.bongamusic.com.

JAMES “TIGA” JEAN-BAPTISTE (percussion, mbira, didgeridoo)

Born into a family deeply rooted in traditional Afro-Haitian musical expression, Tiga began drumming at the age of 3 beside his father Bonga. While in his teens, Tiga studied jazz with renowned Haitian jazz saxophonist Thurgot Theodat from whom he quickly learned a circular breathing technique that enhanced his skills on Haitian bamboo & tin horns (called vaksinn and koné). The technique led Tiga to the didgeridoo which he has now mastered. Within a few short years of picking up the Shona Mbira of Zimbabwe, Tiga has mastered that too and performed with Zimbabwe's greatest exponents of the Shona Mbira, Thomas Mapfumo and Stella Chiweshe, with whom he trained. Tiga has performed with Grace Jones, John Legend and was invited to Japan with the Tet Kale Orchestra. He is a teaching artist with the non-profit organization Global Kids and is also a featured accompanist with Pat Hall Dance and Urban Tap.

ZACKA JEAN-BAPTISTE (Haitian drums; vocals)

Keeping alive the legacy of Afro-Haitian music is Zacka - one of Haiti's fastest rising young Vodou music stars. Zacka began playing drums at the age of five and received his early training as a ceremonial drummer with Haiti's drum masters in the La Plaine province, most significantly his mentor and father Bonga. He is skilled in both the Rada and Petwo styles. In 2008 Zacka was invited to Bordeaux France to perform in Les Nuits Atypiques de Langon festival as part of a humanitarian tour featuring renowned American folk great Peter Yarrow. That same year, The National Council for Traditional Arts in the U.S. recognized Zacka as an authentic practitioner of Haitian roots music inviting him to the American Folk Festival. With a solid musical foundation and repertoire of Afro-Haitian rhythms, Zacka embodies the spirit of Haiti's young, contemporary roots musicians who are keeping the Rasin music tradition alive. Zacka has several recording, workshop and performance dates slated for 2009 in the United States.



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SHEILA ANOZIER (Haitian & free-style dancer; choreographer)

Sheila Anozier began her formal training in dance at Long Island University, where she met Ella Thompson Moore, an original member of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, who encouraged her to keep training. In December 2002 she toured with singer/dancer Wunmi Olaiya in Tokyo, Japan. Sheila toured with the critically acclaimed Tamango's Urban Tap from 2001 to 2003. Her performances have taken her to venues and festivals across the United States, Canada, Europe, and Asia including the Montreal International Jazz Festival, Vollos Festival in Greece, The Hague Holland Dance Festival in the Netherlands, and the AltstadtHerbst festival in Germany. New York performances include Lincoln Center "Out of Doors", The Joyce, Dance Theatre Workshop, The Kitchen, and SOB's. In the summer of 2007 she served as choreographer and dancer for Brave New World Repertory Theatre: "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry" at Celebrate Brooklyn, Prospect Park Bandshell. Sheila teaches workshops and classes in New York City.

RUFUS CAPPADOCIA (cello)

Rufus is one of the leading voices of the modern cello. After years of experimentation and practice he now plays a self designed 5-string electric cello that expands the bass range and tonal possibilities of the instrument. Rufus has made a career of going where few cellists have gone before. Rufus has performed with Kasse Mady, Aretha Franklin, Odetta, Vernon Reid, Ross Daily, Kif and more. His rhythmic and sonic approach has led to collaborations with musicians from the Balkans, Ireland, West Africa, Greece and the Caribbean. He has toured throughout the Americas and Europe with numerous groups and he is one half the duo Bethany & Rufus. Rufus was first introduced to the cello at age three through the Suzuki method. By age 6 he had begun his studies with the renowned Czech cellist Zdenick Konicek. He continued to play classical music as a teen but was increasingly inspired to find a voice that would allow him to reach a larger audience and work with contemporary instrumentation. www.rufusmusic.com