

SONOROUS INNOVATION: WILLIAM CEPEDA'S AFRO PUERTO RICAN JAZZ BIG BAND JAZZ ORCHESTRA, THE FIRST IN PUERTO RICO.



FOR OVER A DECADE, DR. WILLIAM CEPEDA DEDICATED HIMSELF TO COMPOSING MUSIC FOR BIG BAND, WITH THE DREAM OF ONE DAY FORMING PUERTO RICO'S FIRST BIG BAND. THIS BOLD VISION AROSE FROM THE NEED TO INTERPRET AND CONVEY THE DIVERSITY OF PUERTO RICAN MUSIC IN A UNIQUE MUSICAL FORMAT, NEVER BEFORE EXPLORED IN THE ISLAND'S HISTORY.

IN 2022, THANKS TO A GRANT AWARDED BY THE PRESTIGIOUS ARTS AND CULTURE ORGANIZATION SOUTH ARTS - JAZZ ROAD CREATIVE RESIDENCES, CEPEDA SUCCEEDED IN BRINGING TO LIFE HIS MOST AMBITIOUS MUSICAL PROJECT: THE CREATION OF PUERTO RICO'S FIRST JAZZ ORCHESTRA IN THE TRADITIONAL "BIG BAND" FORMAT, COMPRISED OF 22 MUSICIANS. HE ALSO BECAME THE FIRST PUERTO RICAN MUSICIAN TO RECEIVE IT.

THUS WAS BORN THE "WILLIAM CEPEDA AFRO PUERTO RICAN BIG BAND JAZZ ORCHESTRA." UNDER CEPEDA'S MASTERFUL DIRECTION, THIS INITIATIVE SETS IMPORTANT PRECEDENTS FOR THE LOCAL JAZZ SCENE, PRESENTING AN EXCITING REPERTOIRE THAT BLENDS THE MAIN TRADITIONAL FOLK GENRES WITH JAZZ.

AS PART OF THIS PROJECT, TWO CONCERTS WERE HELD, ON JUNE 4TH IN PALMAS DEL MAR AND ON JUNE 18TH AT THE TEATRO ALEJANDRO TAPIA Y RIVERA IN OLD SAN JUAN; THE MUSIC FOR THESE CONCERTS WAS COMPOSED BY CEPEDA AND PERFORMED BY A LARGE ORCHESTRA.

THE CONCERT AT TEATRO TAPIA WAS RECORDED FOR DOCUMENTATION PURPOSES AND LATER BECAME EXCLUSIVE MATERIAL THAT GAVE LIFE TO THE ALBUM "THE SOUND OF PUERTO RICAN JAZZ," A VIBRANT REPRESENTATION OF PUERTO RICO'S RICH MUSIC.