



Aruán Ortiz Biography

Aruán Ortiz is an internationally acclaimed Cuban pianist, award-winning composer, and a solid producer and educator.

Named "the latest Cuban wunderkind to arrive in the United States" by BET Jazz, this classically trained violist and pianist from Santiago de Cuba, considers himself "a curious person who loves music", and portrays his music as an architectural structure of sounds, incorporating contemporary classical music, Afro-Cuban rhythms, and improvisation as primary material for his compositions. He has received a number of awards such as the Doris Duke Artist Impact Award (2014), Artist-in-Residence at Pocantico Center at the Rockefeller Brothers Fund (2014), Latin Jazz Corner's Arranger of the Year (2011) for his contribution on the album, "El Cumbanchero" (Jazzheads) by flutist Mark Weinstein; Semifinalist, Jas Hennessy Piano Solo Competition, Montreux, Switzerland (2001); and Best Jazz Interpretation, Festival de Jazz in Vic, Spain (2000).

Since arriving in New York in 2008 to play with the Wallace Roney Quintet, Aruán has made five recordings, all very well received by the critics. Alameda (Fresh Sound, 2010), received four stars in Jazzwise magazine (U.K.), and was reviewed as "a sophisticated outing of modern jazz." This album was also named one of the top jazz CDs of the year in 2010 by numerous jazz magazines and blogs around the world.

Two thousand twelve was a very intense musical year, as Mr. Ortiz released three albums as a leader: the modern jazz effort, Orbiting (Fresh Sound 2012), was featured in Jazzman and Jazznews Magazine, received four stars from Jazzwise Magazine and Jazz Journal in the UK, and was one of the top ten contemporary jazz albums of 2012 according to "Something Else!" webzine; Santiarican Blues Suite (Sunnyside 2012), received four and a half stars from Downbeat Magazine, and was featured on major jazz blogs and magazines worldwide. Bill Milkowski from JazzTimes Magazine recently proclaimed, "These two simultaneous releases herald the arrival of a major new talent."

On his latest CD, Banned in London (Whirlwind Recordings 2012, released in 2013 in the U.S.), Aruán co-leads a Cuban/US collaboration, a powerful quintet, with bassist/composer Michael Janisch featuring saxophonist Greg Osby and Rudy Royston on drums. Their CD was selected one of the best albums of the year (2013) by Downbeat Magazine, and received five stars on BBC Jazz Radio, and four stars in the Jazz Journal, Jazzwise Magazine, Financial Times, and The Guardian in the UK, where it was also on the list of best jazz albums of 2012.

As a composer, Ortiz has received commissions from the Woodwind Quintet Ensemble of Santiago de Cuba; Música de Camara Orchestra in New York City; Oyú Oró Folkloric Dance Company in New York City; YOUME & Milena Zullo Ballet in Rome; José Mateo Ballet Theater in Cambridge, MA; and University of Albany Symphony Orchestra in New York. In late 2013 and early 2014, he composed and directed the score for the upcoming feature film, 'Sin Alas,' to be released in fall 2014.

Ortiz has also played, toured or recorded with Esperanza Spalding, Joe Lovano, Terri Lyne Carrington, Mingus Big Band, Cindy Blackman-Santana, Don Byron, Lenny White, Greg Osby, and Wallace Roney, among others.

He is available with his quartet (Rez Abbasi (guitar), Josh Ginsburg (bass), Gerald Cleaver (drums)), solo or as a guest artist/lecturer.

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