

Antonio Sanchez

Biography

When a powerhouse arrives on the scene, be it in the fields of sport, literature, or music, what initially attracts are the artifacts of talent, not talent itself. As consumers we are wowed by prowess, by technique, by human gifts that can appear superhuman when present in a Michael Jordan, a Garcia Marquez or a Herbie Hancock. But as the powerhouse evolves his true nature is revealed, and it's never a simple display of technique, but rather an amalgam of inspiration, innate gift and extreme hard work.

Since he arrived in New York City in the late 1990s, Antonio Sanchez has been one of those powerhouses to watch and remember. Extracting an incredible array of colors from the drums, Sanchez defies nature with extraordinary dynamic shifts, subtle colorations, metric super-impositions, and streamlined clave patterns. But as heard initially with pianist Danilo Perez and most recently on his own *Live In New York At Jazz Standard*, Sanchez not only dazzles with herculean technique, but more importantly, he swings -- and in the old school sense of the word. Through recordings such as Chick Corea's *Dr. Joe*, Michael Brecker's *Wide Angles*, Gary Burton's *Quartet Live*, Avishai Cohen's *Unity*, Miguel Zenon's *Jibaro*, Donny McCaslin's *In Pursuit*, and Pat Metheny's *Speaking Of Now, The Way Up, and Day Trip*, Sanchez's brilliant evolution has become evident to all. Gary Burton's new album features Antonio's drumming as well as his composing skills on the title track, "*Common Ground*."

Migration, Sanchez's 2007 Cam Jazz debut as a leader, topped many critics' year end polls, the album's outstanding musicianship (featuring Chick Corea and Metheny) and memorable melodies making it both technically engrossing and easily enjoyable. A Magna Cum Laude Berklee School of Music graduate in Jazz Studies, a former student at the New England Conservatory of Music and an alumni of Mexico's prestigious National Conservatory (where he majored in classical piano and composition), Sanchez thoroughly understands complex harmony and compositional structure, which when coupled to his love of music from all over the world produces jazz that satisfies on multiple levels.

"Antonio Sanchez, the drummer and composer," notes *The New York Times*' Nate Chinen, "compresses many of the strategies from the last 40 years of small-group jazz into each performance, while letting some of today's best soloists tear it up. [His drumming is] a tumbling overspill, deceptive in its suggestion of abandon."

Sanchez's latest, *Live In New York At Jazz Standard* (Cam Jazz), looses the reins on his drumming and composing skills. Accompanied by David Sanchez (tenor), Miguel Zenon (alto) and Scott Colley (upright bass), the bristling double CD set (recorded in October, 2008) documents a band on fire, engaging in the kind of heated interplay that only occurs in longstanding musical relationships.

One of these relationships is with acclaimed guitarist and composer, Pat Metheny. "The thing that impressed me the most when I first heard Antonio with Danilo Perez," Metheny recalls, "was how soft he could play and still keep it absolutely burning. My first impression was that he was an introspective drummer, but only a few minutes later it sounded like Danilo had added three percussionists to the band -- and it was all Antonio! And that was burning too. Antonio's maturity, his musical vision, and his amazing aptitude to see the whole musical picture that's happening *beyond* the drum set itself is tremendous. His presence in the group represents one of the most significant changes in the band's 28 year history."

A three time Grammy Award winner, Antonio Sanchez was born in Mexico City on November 1st, 1971, the grandson of Mexican film star Ignacio Lopez Tarso. Sanchez became interested in the drums at the age of five, playing along to the records of The Beatles, Led Zeppelin, The Police and Rush. His professional career began in his early teens with a variety of local rock bands. After school, Sanchez pursued a degree in classical piano at Mexico's National Conservatory. Leaving Mexico City to enroll at Berklee in 1993, he graduated with honors and was the recipient of several scholarships, most notably

the Buddy Rich Memorial Scholarship and the Zildjian Award. The New England Conservatory of Music awarded him another one to pursue a Masters in Jazz Improvisation.

While still at the Conservatory in 1997, his instructor, Danilo Perez, recommended him to Paquito D'Rivera for Dizzy Gillespie's United Nations Orchestra. Later that same year, Sanchez joined Perez's acoustic trio; which led to intense international touring and the recording of the Grammy nominated *Motherland*. Years later Sanchez would experience his first encounter with Pat Metheny, who eventually invited him to join his group. Sanchez's debut with Metheny on 2002's *Speaking of Now* led to a Grammy Award in the "Best Contemporary Jazz Album" category. The *Way Up* followed in January 2005. Sanchez is a regular member of Metheny's quartets and trios, the latter including bassist Christian McBride on the 2008 CD, *Day Trip* which also got a nomination in 2009.

Migration, and now, *Live In New York At Jazz Standard*, reveal Sanchez's evolution as a composer, which draws on every facet of his musical life.

Today, Sanchez is one of the most in-demand drummers on the international jazz scene, regularly recording and touring alongside Chick Corea, Gary Burton, Kenny Werner, Charlie Haden, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Dianne Reeves, and Toots Thielmans. He has collaborated with the new generation of players that includes Joshua Redman, Chris Potter, John Patitucci, David Sanchez, Marcus Roberts, Avishai Cohen, Miguel Zenon, Scott Colley, Dave Samuels, Luciana Souza, Billy Childs, and Claudia Acuña, to name a few.

A popular clinician, Sanchez has taught all over the world. His first instructional DVD, as part of Hudson Music's *Music Master Series*, was released in 2008. Sanchez has performed at the most prestigious drum festivals worldwide, including the *Modern Drummer* Festival Weekend, Zildjian Day, and Montreal Drum Festival. Sanchez has been a featured cover artist on such international publications as *Modern Drummer* (USA), *Musico Pro* (USA), *Percussioni* (Italy), and *Drums & Percussion* (Germany).

"With Antonio at the helm," the late Michael Brecker noted, "there's never any guesswork about the time. Antonio has an individual, clear sound on the drums, blending superbly in any live or studio situation. He can improvise in the moment, so I love playing duets with him. It feels like he's in my head! Antonio has ferocious technique, but he never uses it superfluously or mechanically. He brings his own personality to every musical genre. His warmth and sublime musicality inspires trust, which is the most important ingredient for making truly spontaneous music."

Antonio is endorsed by Yamaha Drums, Zildjian Cymbals and Sticks (Antonio's Signature model), Remo Drumheads and LP Percussion (which carries Antonio's Signature Percussion Kit).

He resides in New York City.

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