
Paquito D'Rivera

Paquito D’Rivera, considered one of the world’s finest saxophonists and clarinetists, has received no fewer than 18 Grammy and Latin Grammy Awards combined (7 Grammy and 11 Latin Grammy) throughout his extensive musical career. He is the author of a vast body of work that reveals his broad and eclectic musical interests, ranging from Afro-Cuban rhythms and melodies, including influences gathered during his many travels, to his musical origins.

The jazz musician, arranger, and composer is passionate about both jazz and classical music and has become a leading figure in Afro-Cuban music and the standards of modern Latin jazz.

He was born in Cuba, where he began his career as a child prodigy, playing both clarinet and saxophone with the Cuban National Symphony Orchestra. The son of Cuban saxophonist and orchestra leader Tito D'Rivera, Paquito began studying music at just five years old and by seven he was already performing in front of the public and had signed a contract with the famous musical instrument manufacturer 'Selmer'

He was a founding member and co-director of the innovative musical group ‘Irakere’, alongside his close friend Chucho Valdés, a group that stood out for its explosive blend of jazz, rock, classical music, and traditional Cuban music.

Paquito D’Rivera is a master of the clarinet, alto saxophone, and soprano saxophone. He has received numerous awards for his contributions to Latin jazz and as a composer of classical music.



Paquito D'Rivera defies categorization. He has won a combined 18 Grammy and Latin Grammy Awards (7 Grammy and 11 Latin Grammy). He is celebrated for both his artistry in Latin jazz and his achievements as a classical composer.

Born in Havana, Cuba, he performed at the age of ten with the orchestra of the National Theater of Cuba, studied at the Havana Conservatory of Music, and at 17 became a featured soloist with the National Symphony Orchestra. As a founding member of the Cuban Orchestra of Modern Music, he led the group for two years while simultaneously playing clarinet and saxophone with the National Symphony Orchestra of Cuba. He went on to present several works by notable Cuban composers with the same orchestra.

In addition, he was a founding member and co-director of the groundbreaking band Irakere. With its explosive blend of jazz, rock, classical, and traditional Cuban music unlike anything heard before, Irakere toured throughout the Americas and Europe, earning numerous Grammy nominations (1979, 1980) and a Grammy Award (1979). His extensive recordings include more than 30 solo albums. In 1988, he founded The United Nation Orchestra, a 15-member band organized by Dizzy Gillespie to showcase the fusion of Latin and Caribbean influences with jazz. D'Rivera continues to appear as a guest conductor. The United Nation Orchestra won a Grammy in 1991, the same year D'Rivera received a Carnegie Hall Lifetime Achievement Award for his contributions to Latin music. On the other hand, D'Rivera's highly acclaimed bands, the Chamber Jazz Ensemble, the Paquito D'Rivera Big Band, and the Paquito D'Rivera Quintet, are in high demand all over the world.

While D'Rivera's discography reflects a dedication to and enthusiasm for jazz, bebop, and Latin music, his contributions to classical music are equally impressive. These include solo performances with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, the London Symphony Orchestra, the Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra, the National Symphony Orchestra, the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, the Florida Symphony Orchestra, and the Brooklyn Philharmonic. He has also performed with the Puerto Rico Symphony Orchestra, the Costa Rica National Symphony Orchestra, the Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra, the Bronx Arts Ensemble, and the St. Luke's Chamber Orchestra, among others. Driven by his passion for giving greater prominence to the Latin repertoire, D'Rivera has successfully created, championed, and promoted all kinds of classical compositions, including his three chamber works recorded live in concert with the distinguished cellist Yo-Yo Ma in September 2003. The chamber work, Merengue Live at Zankel Hall, was released by Sony Records, and D'Rivera earned his seventh Grammy Award for Best Instrumental Composition in 2004. D'Rivera has quickly gained a reputation as a successful composer. His prestigious music label, Boosey and Hawkes, is the exclusive record label for D'Rivera's compositions.

More recent recognition of his compositional abilities came with the award of the John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship in 2007 for musical composition and his appointment as composer-in-residence at the Caramoor Music and Arts Center with the Orchestra of St. Luke for the 2007–2008 term. As part of Caramoor's Latin

American music initiative, Sonidos Latinos, D'Rivera's new concerto for double bass and clarinet/saxophone, Conversations with Cachao, pays homage to the legendary Cuban bassist Israel "Cachao" López. D'Rivera's works also often reveal his broad and eclectic musical interests, ranging from Afro-Cuban rhythms and melodies—including influences encountered on his many travels—to his musical origins. The inspiration for another of his new compositions, The Cape Cod Files (2009), comes from sources as diverse as Benny Goodman's intro to Eubie Blake's folk song "Memories of You," the Argentine milonga, improvisations on the music of Cuban composer Ernesto Lecuona, and American boogie-woogie. His numerous commissions include jazz compositions for Lincoln Center, the Library of Congress, the National Symphony Orchestra, the Rotterdam Philharmonic, the Turtle Island String Quartet, the Ying String Quartet, the International Double Reed Society, Sicacusa University, Montreal's Gerald Danovich Saxophone Quartet, and the Grant Park Music Festival.



Another commission came through the band Opus 21 and their interest in building bridges between audiences from diverse backgrounds. Dedicated to 21st-century musical work and art, Opus 21 commissioned "The Chaser" and premiered it in May 2006. In 2005, Imani Winds, a wind quintet, committed to exploring the diverse traditions of world music, expanding into the wind quintet repertoire, and commissioned "Kites." This work embodied freedom and the vision that such freedom and independence are grounded in culture and music. Just as a kite flies freely, its path remains tied to the earth—its base—by the string.

D’Rivera is the author of two books: My Sax Life, published by Northwestern University Press, and a novel, Oh, La Habana, published by MT Editores, Barcelona. He was awarded the NEA Jazz Masters Award in 2005 and the National Medal of Arts in 2005, as well as the Living Jazz Legend Award from The Kennedy Center in 2007. His many other honors include honorary doctorates in Music (from Berklee College of Music in Boston and the University of Pennsylvania) and the Clarinetist of the Year Award from the Jazz Journalists Association in 2004 and 2006. In 2008, D’Rivera received the Association for Jazz Education Present Award and the Frankfurter Musikpreis in Germany. He also received the National Arts Club Medal of Honor in 2009. In 2010, he was named a Nelson A. Rockefeller Honoree and received the Spelman College African-American Classical Music Award.



He received his tenth and eleventh Grammy Awards in 2011 for Panamericana Suite as Best Latin Album and Best Contemporary Classical Composition, adding to his previous Grammy Awards for Riberas (Best Classical Recording 2005) and Funk Tango (Best Latin Jazz Album 2008). D’Rivera is the first artist to win Latin Grammys in both the classical and Latin jazz categories—for Stravinsky’s The Soldier’s Tale (L’Histoire du Soldat) (2003) and Brazilian Dreams (2002) with New York Voices. He has served as artistic director for the jazz program of the New Jersey Chamber Music Society, the DC Jazz Festival in Washington, D.C., and Jazz Patagonia in Chile, and continues as artistic director of the renowned Punta del Este International Jazz Festival in Uruguay.

In 1999, to celebrate its 500th anniversary, the University of Alcalá de Henares presented D’Rivera with a special award recognizing his contribution to the arts, his personal qualities, and his advocacy for the rights and freedoms of artists worldwide. The National Endowment for the Arts states on its website that he “has become an accomplished multinational ambassador, creating and promoting an intercultural musical landscape that moves effortlessly between jazz, Latin music, and Mozart”.



PAQUITO D'RIVERA QUINTETO:

Paquito D'Rivera
Pepe Rivero (piano)
Reinier Elizarde "El Negro" (contrabajo)
Georvis Pico Milian (batería)
Sebastián Laverde (vibráfono)

PAQUITO D´RIVERA TRÍO:

Paquito D'Rivera
Pepe Rivero (piano)
Sebastián Laverde (vibráfono)

CUBA EN LA DISTANCIA:

Paquito D'Rivera + Carlos Cano + Hernán Milla

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