



A Musical Celebration of Cuba in America

*"Two big cultural streams flowing simultaneously ...ancient and experimental at the same time, and capacious enough to include more and more." -- Ben Ratliff, **The New York Times***

Renowned pianist and composer **Michele Rosewoman** presents **New Yor-Uba: A Musical Celebration of Cuba in America**, featuring fellow masters from the worlds of contemporary jazz and Cuban folkloric music. The name "New Yor-Uba" pays homage to the dynamic musical journey of ancient Yoruba culture from Nigeria, through Cuba to present day New York, reflecting its contemporary manifestations.

Brass, saxophones, and a rhythm section complement key Cuban elements including three bata and conga drummers, traditional vocals and dance. **New Yor-Uba** salutes the *Orishas* (Yoruban deities) in a contemporary jazz setting with a distinctive repertoire featuring Ms. Rosewoman's original compositions and visionary arrangements that incorporate a large spectrum of Cuban spiritually-based music, including, Yoruba (Nigeria), Arará (Dahomey), Abakuá (Calabar) and rumba/guaguanco, a uniquely Cuban musical form.

"New Yor-Uba, A Musical Celebration of Cuba in America" debuted in 1983 at Joseph Papp's Public Theater in New York City. The ensemble has performed at major festivals and venues throughout Europe and the United States and Ms. Rosewoman was among the first to bring an undiluted form of Cuban folklore into New York City jazz clubs.

Now with an almost 40-year progression, New Yor-Uba's concept and sound remain uniquely vital as Rosewoman continues to enhance the ensemble's repertoire with new music and personnel, further inspiring her to reflect upon and explore the links between these deep musical traditions.

"Hallowed" November 2019 Advance Dance Disques

A 2015-16 Chamber Music America New Jazz Works Commission supported the development of her latest exploration. The resulting new work, "Oru de Oro", is a rhythmic suite anchored to a sacred sequence of rhythms known as the Oru Igbo, where 23 Orishas are endowed with Rosewoman's distinctive musical content while displaying and integrating the mastery of featured soloists and master drummers. Featuring master folklorist/percussionist Roman Diaz, a foundational member of the ensemble since 2008, "Oru de Oro" was recorded along with other new repertoire and **"Hallowed"** was released on Rosewoman's label (Advance Dance Disques) in November of 2019, to stellar reviews in major publications including JazzTimes, Jazziz, Downbeat (4 1/2*) and #3 NPR Latin Jazz Recording of the Year.

Following their 2013 double disc release which celebrated 30 years and garnered the #1 NPR Latin Jazz Recording of the year award, "Hallowed" is a true continuation of Rosewoman's in-depth exploration of sacred Afro-Cuban musical traditions and presents another exciting chapter in the now 38-year evolution of this highly acclaimed ensemble

Rosewoman states: *The deepening of my approach, knowledge, and relationship to this profound tradition that I am so completely bound to, prepared me on multiple levels to manifest this extended and most challenging composition. I am very grateful to Chamber Music America for supporting my evolution."*

"HALLOWED" REVIEWS

"Michele Rosewoman's juggernaut ensemble ... superbly sets modern American avant-garde jazz inside sacred Afro-Cuban rhythms. Master percussionist Roman Diaz serves as the music's spiritual guiding light... Rosewoman's sterling piano-playing makes the music burst with such fresh aplomb, sounding simultaneously ancient and futuristic... while her estimable piano improvisations are in service of the music, instead of simply being an exhibitionist's showcase...Her restive, percussive playing is the secret ingredient, even as the horns dispense fragmented motifs that sometimes expand into harmonically striking, impressionistic accompaniments. But when the pianist's instrumental work comes more to the fore... the brilliance of her musicality shines all the more. Overall, it's Rosewoman, the superlative composer and bandleader, who reigns supreme on this near-flawless outing."

Downbeat ** 1/2 John Murph**

"...the year's finest spirited representation of Cuban folkloric music and jazz infused with energetic notes of the African diaspora. "Hallowed" anoints Rosewoman as a griot of Cuban folklore, who carries on the tradition of pianist and composer Randy Weston."

Amsterdam News / Ron Scott

"...If there is a more satisfying group around—one with as compelling a blend of ancient and new, of earthiness and urbanity, of ritual music and jazz-based improvisation—please tell me about them."

Larry Blumenfeld /Blu Notes

"The evolution of New Yor-Uba, pianist Michele Rosewoman's painstaking synthesis of modern jazz and ancient Afro-Cuban folkloric traditions, has been a journey of slow-motion magnificence... Rosewoman's abiding faith in these centuries-old rhythms... provides New Yor-Uba with an idiosyncratic discipline similar to Henry Threadgill's Zooid or Steve Coleman's Five Elements. As with those

ensembles, listeners are richly rewarded by marinating in the music." **JazzTimes**

"I can think of almost no other musician in recent (or, indeed, past) times who has been able to – in an original contemporary composition – make such masterful use of the sacred bātá drums.... Miss Rosewoman anchors herself in the ancient tradition with a view to always look forward and what a spectacular way in which to do it indeed...With this album, Hallowed, Miss Rosewoman's music, quite simply, ascends to the rarefied realm. Truly an album to die for." **Latin Jazz Network /Raul deGama**

"Thirty-five years ago, pianist and composer Michele Rosewoman broke ground on what would become a signature achievement, the Afro-Cuban jazz ensemble New Yor-Uba...Its mission has been steadfast.

On some level it's never been clearer than it is on the new album, Hallowed."

NPR / Nate Chinen

MORE CITICAL ACCLAIM

2013 Critics Polls, Performance and CD Reviews

The September 2013 release of **New Yor-Uba's** debut CD marked the ensemble's 30-year anniversary and brought great acclaim and extensive press. **The National Public Radio (NPR) Critics Poll : #1 Latin Jazz Release of 2013** and #25 of Best Recordings of the Year. **Downbeat Critics Poll:** #14 Best Release of the Year. **Jazz Times Critics Poll,:** #14 Best Releases of the Year **and one of the best large ensembles of the year.** The CD received a 4 1/2 star review in Downbeat among many other rave reviews and the New York Times lists the New Yor-Uba Dizzy's Lincoln Center CD release performance as **one of the Best Concerts of the Year.** Feature stories: NPR Fresh Air, the Wall Street Journal, the New York Times, Jazz Iz, Jazz Times and many others.

*"Two big cultural streams flowing simultaneously ...cultural multiplicity in sound taken to a reasonable extreme, where a song can still be allowed to sound logical and beautiful...ancient and experimental at the same time, and capacious enough to include more and more.." Ben Ratliff, **The New York Times***

*"Dazzling tracks...startling for its balance of unfettered improvisation and undiluted Cuban folklore within a complex and often grand structure...stylistic swagger and spiritual heft..." Larry Blumenfeld, **The Wall Street Journal***

*"Absolutely one of the most exceptional records of 2013 is pianist-composer Michele Rosewoman's 30th Anniversary New Yor-Uba release." Willard Jenkins, **The Independent Ear***

Pianist Michele Rosewoman has created the masterpiece she's envisioned for 30 years, an extended loving and fully informed evocation....Two discs... and doubly rewarding." Howard Mandel, **Jazz Journalists Association News**

1983 Debut Performance

"Ms. Rosewoman's music – dissonant melodies, brass chorales, chromatic ballads and orchestrated vamps for brasses, saxophones, and a jazz rhythm section, as the groove shifted from the flow of the Santeria chants to the swing of a jazz band – was jazz that didn't simply use Afro-Cuban rhythms as decoration, but layered melodies and rhythms with equal force and weight." **The New York Times**

*"New Yor-uba is soulful evidence that Rosewoman is on to something significant. The music was energetic, propulsive and especially noteworthy largely because it...fully integrated orchestrated brasses, saxophones, and a jazz back line, with traditional Yoruban chants sung to the heavy rhythmic accompaniment of congas and bata drums, ceremoniously arriving at sumptuous Ellington-like orchestrations..."**Downbeat Magazine***

BACKGROUND

Ms. Rosewoman's life-long immersion in both traditions led to the formation of **New Yor-Uba**. Her interest in Cuban music was born in a home full of music and art. Exposed in her early years to a spectrum of great jazz traditions and to spiritually-based music from around the world, she began playing piano at age 6. In her late teens she began playing congas and percussion, studying African-based drum and vocal traditions, specifically Cuban and Haitian forms, with an emphasis on the ritualized, spiritual aspects of the music. These early explorations would profoundly impact Rosewoman's musical direction with a pervasive influence on the formation of her sound as a pianist and composer. She is credited as one of the first in bringing together Cuban Folkloric music with a thoroughly contemporary jazz concept for an uncompromised synthesis of these two profound musical idioms.

Upon coming to New York in 1978, Rosewoman continued to nurture her collaborative work with various jazz luminaries and also began playing with Cuban dance bands. She soon formed a most important association with the late Cuban master drummer/vocalist Orlando "Puntilla" Rios. A repository of tradition, he was both a mentor and a member of her **New Yor-Uba** ensemble for 25 years, until his passing in 2008. Master Cuban folklorist Román Díaz has been a foundational member of the ensemble since 2008.

Early support from the National Endowment for the Arts facilitated the premiere of Rosewoman's pioneering concept and 14-piece ensemble featuring Orlando 'Puntilla' Rios, at Joseph Papp's Public Theater in New York City. The ensemble's sold-out debut in 1983 signaled the emergence of an important new voice and received rave reviews in the New York Times and The Village Voice.

Ms. Rosewoman has performed with many Jazz and Latin greats including, in the Latin music genre, the late Celia Cruz, Paquito

D'Rivera, Andy Gonzales, Roberto Borrell, Daniel Ponce, Chocolate, Nicky Marrero, Dave Valentin, Arturo O'Farrill and Puntilla's Nueva Generación, among many others.

NEW YOR-UBA PERFORMANCES

The Kennedy Center, Joseph Papp's Public Theater, Museum of Natural History NYC, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture NYC, The Painted Bride Arts Center/Philly, Philadelphia Clef Club of Jazz and Performing Arts, Roulette/Brooklyn, The Egg Center for Performing Arts/Albany NY, Tishman Auditorium NYC, Kuumbwa Jazz/Santa Cruz, Jazz Track/Greenwich House, NYC, INTAR Hispanic Cultural Center/NYC, Dizzy's Lincoln Center, Yoshi's/Oakland, The Montmartre, Copenhagen, Nickelsdorf/Austria, NOS Radio Festival/Holland, the Atlanta, Washington D.C., Lake George, Vision NYC, Montclair NJ, Berlin, Paris, Warsaw, Zurich, Tampere Finland and Salzburg Austria Jazz Festivals, S.O.B's NYC, Sweet Basil and Sweet Rhythm NYC, Yale University, Harvard University, Cal Sate University Fresno, University of Massachusetts Amherst MA, HOSTOS College, Bronx NY.

PERSONNEL

Many of the finest musicians from both the jazz and Cuban traditions have performed with New Yor-Uba, including

Billy Harper	Freddie Hendrix	Román Díaz
Antonio Hart	Michael Mossman	Pedrito Martinez
Greg Osby	Baikida Carroll	Orlando "Puntilla" Rios
Gary Thomas	Vincent Gardner	Eddie Bobè
Mark Shim	Bob Stewart	Gene Golden
John Stubblefield	Howard Johnson	Eddie Rodriguez
Oliver Lake	Andy Gonzales	Alberto Morgan
Steve Wilson	Rufus Reid	Ernesto 'Gato' Gatell
Gary Bartz	Kenny Davis	Abraham Rodriguez
Don Byron	Anthony Cox	Steve Berrios
Joe Ford	Gene Jackson	Mauricio Herrera
Roman Filiú	Adam Cruz	Yunior Terry
Ingrid Jensen	Chris Washburne	Robby Ameen
Stacy Dillard	Alex Norris	Rafael Monteagudo
Mike Thomas	Gregg August	Alberto Morgan

New Yor-Uba forever pays homage to the contributions and legacy of master folklorist Orlando "Puntilla" Rios.

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