GRAMMY® Award-Winning Pianist, Composer, Educator and Social Activist Danilo Pérez Reaches New Artistic Heights with *Crisálida*, Featuring His New Formidable Ensemble, the Global Messengers

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“I envision ***Crisálida*** as a protected space where we all come together, whether we’re addressing immigration issues, climate change, environmental justice, science, interconnecting different art forms,” Pérez explains. “We need to work together to build our new crisálida, which, to me, is the emotional, mental and physical state of protection in our early development.”

Crisálida is composed of two engrossing suites on which he leads the **Global Messengers**, an intrepid new ensemble, consisting of alumni from Berklee College of Music’s Global Jazz Institute. Similar to Dizzy Gillespie’s United Nations Orchestra, which helped launched Pérez’s international career, the Global Messengers is a multicultural combo that features percussionist **Tareq Rantisi** (Palestine), laouto player **Vasilis Kostas** (Greece), violinist and vocalist **Layth Sidiq** (Iraq, Jordan), cellist **Naseem Alatrash** (Palestine) and singer **Farayi Malek** (United States). Guest appearing on several cuts are batá drummer **Román Diaz** (Cuba), Ney flutist **Faris Ishaq** (Palestine), **Zárate** (Chile), singer **Eirini Tornesaki** (Greece) and the **Kalesma Children’s Choir of The Ark of the World (Kivotos tou Kosmou)** (based in Greece).

“These musicians are very interested in cultivating their gifts to become role models for the betterment of humanity. I love this openness of wanting to explore and connect,” says Pérez, who in addition to being the founder of the Berklee Global Jazz Institute, is a UNESCO Artist for Peace, the Cultural Ambassador to the Republic of Panama, and the Founder and Artistic Director of the Panama Jazz Festival.

“In the Berklee Global Jazz Institute, we talk a lot about finding new sounds through the blues and connecting to your roots – expanding the folkloric elements of where you come from,” he adds. “The Global Messengers are a new family that explores the power of music as a tool for inter-cultural dialogue.”

With their intriguing, unconventional instrumentation (to jazz standards), the Global Messengers afford the music with an arabesque, “beyond category” quality that alludes to chamber music, cinematic score and, of course, the sparkling improvisation associated with jazz. The album’s four-part **“La Muralla (Glass Walls) Suite”** occupies the first half, while the four-part **“Fronteras (Borders) Suite”** concludes the program.

The “La Muralla (Glass Walls) Suite” begins with the gorgeous **“Rise from Love,”** which features stunning vocals from Malek along with Kalesma Children’s Choir of The Ark of the World. Underneath the alluring strings and Pérez’s suspenseful piano improvisation and jabbing accompaniment is Diaz’s surging batá rhythms, symbolizing Africa’s arrival to the Western world and worldwide influence on music. On **“Monopatia (Pathways),”** Pérez initiates a suspenseful musical dialogue with Kostas before the rest of the band enters, establishing a 21st century universal blues that connects the dots between Middle

Eastern and Mediterranean sonic imprints, African American sensibilities and Latin America's rhythmic and melodic flourishes. The composition also showcases Zárate's commanding spoken-word artistry as well as Tornesaki's poignant singing.

An increased sense of urgency arrives with **"Calling for the Dawn"** as Rantisi begins with an intricate percussion introduction, followed by a triumphant melody delivered by Malek and Sidiq. Pérez's embroidered passages, hammering across the rumbling rhythmic bedrock, heighten the suspense, which is intermittingly interrupted by Malek's asking, "Where are we going? Is it up or down?" "It's a call to the divine," Pérez explains of the composition. "It's a warning that if we mess with nature and the environment, then we are responsible for what comes afterward."

"Muropatía" closes the "La Muralla (Glass Walls) Suite" as the strings animate a coruscating rhythm, based upon a folkloric Panamanian dance that Pérez discovered had very striking similarities of some of Palestine's folkloric rhythms. Pérez's hypnotic piano accompaniment anchor the interlocking polyrhythms, concocted by the strings, vocals and percussion. After he pecks a dramatic solo, Zárate enters the fold to deliver an incisive rap in Spanish.

Pérez says that the "Fronteras (Borders) Suite" was based, in part, by a series of dreams, touching upon the emotional plight of immigration. It begins with the somber **"Adrift,"** which tells the story of a mother seeking to reunite with her daughter after being separated for 20 years. Malek wrote the evocative lyrics and articulates them splendidly as her voice soars across the arresting arrangement.GRAMMY® Award-winning pianist, composer and educator **Danilo Pérez** hopes to usher in a new era of enlightenment that will unite all of humanity with his epic new album, ***Crisálida***, which in English translates to "chrysalis."

Incorporating multiple artistic disciplines that include works from Panamanian painter **Olga Sinclair**, Panamanian photographer **Tito Herrera**, and spoken word from his Chilean wife and saxophonist **Patricia Zárate**, ***Crisálida*** is a holistic inter-disciplinary package that invites listeners to reimagine a world in which we all create our own crisálida so that our individual light and humanity radiates regardless of gender, race, ethnicity or sexual orientation. And, in turn, we nurture that prismatic iridescence to better care for the environment and human race

The Global Messengers summon the universal blues again on **"Al-Musafir Blues,"** which deals with a Palestinian man trying to travel to the U.S. to study but gets stuck in the airport. Alatrash's prowling cello rhythm conveys the sense of determination, while the violin and voice melody evoke the weariness that often comes with seeking better opportunities across international borders.

"With 'Al-Musafir Blues' I wanted to find a connection and understanding to the blues from another perspective," Pérez says. "We need to understand that the blues were created by African Americans – but also that its values and concepts can connect with other cultures. I'm trying to create this musical space where the blues can be the connector in which worldly sounds emerge."

A call-to-action arrives with **"Kalesma (True Calling)"** on which Pérez declares that the world is in a humanitarian crisis. Beginning with a faint violin melody that gives way to a plaintive laouto melody and vocals, the soul-stirring composition unfolds gradually, concluding in a haunting rhythmic and melodic recurring motif.

The "Fronteras (Borders) Suite" ends with the energetic **"Unknown Destination,"** a composition that begins like a casual conversation as Pérez ricochets improvisational passages with the Global Messengers' strings and vocals, underneath Rantisi's percolating rhythms. The composition coalesces into a dynamic collective improvisation that's as cohesive as it is capricious.

History will reveal ***Crisálida*** as yet another one of Pérez's crowning achievements. Now after four decades as a professional musician, some of which has been spent with the world-acclaimed Wayne

Shorter Quartet and leading his own projects, Pérez has now achieved living legend status. Most recently, he won the prestigious 2021 Doris Duke Artist Award of $250,000.

When asked to assess his career at this moment, Pérez responds: “I want to continue my journey of exploring this pathway of using the power of music to unite and humanize. I want to promote music that acts as a bridge and to inspire younger artists to continue the journey and leave something positive that other generations can draw upon.”

With the Global Messengers and ***Crisálida***, Danilo Pérez is succeeding in that mission.

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