

DAFNIS PRIETO BIG BAND

Making his biggest statement yet, Cuban-born drummer, composer, bandleader, and 2011 MacArthur “Genius” Fellow **Dafnis Prieto** premiered the **Dafnis Prieto Big Band** over three exhilarating nights at New York’s Jazz Standard in August 2017, followed by a studio recording of his first big band album. Titled ***Back To The Sunset***, the album was released in April 2018 on Dafnison Music, marking the 10th Anniversary of Prieto’s own record label.

One of the leading musical voices of his generation, Prieto exclusively wrote and rearranged works of his own, underlining once again his prowess as a trailblazing composer while honoring musical heroes and mentors such as **Eddie Palmieri**, **Chico O’Farrill**, **Michel Camilo**, **Henry Threadgill**, and **Steve Coleman**, and making an artistic statement that transcends time and culture.

Since arriving in the U.S. from Cuba in 1999, Prieto has been fearless in his vision, playing and writing across styles, always with a forward-looking eye. He is known for his inventive, sensitive drumming and propulsive rhythm. His compositions mix lush and jubilant melodies with polyrhythm, displaying a range of musical vocabularies from Latin jazz to classical chamber music. He has composed for numerous configurations, amassing a catalog of more than 50 original works.

Prieto is committed to maintaining a bold vision for his music. The 17-piece orchestra showcases some of the world’s best Latin jazz musicians, many of whom have previously played his music in his other bands. It features three horn sections (saxophones, trumpets, and trombones) and a rhythm section of piano, bass, congas, and Prieto on drums. Joined by special guests **Henry Threadgill**, **Steve Coleman**, and **Brian Lynch**, the big band recorded its debut album in New York City in August 2017. The album was produced by GRAMMY and Latin GRAMMY-winning producer **Eric Oberstein**, heralded for producing big band projects with **Arturo O’Farrill**,

For Prieto, creating a big band was also an opportunity to honor his heroes. The album features new versions of his pieces “**Song for Chico**” and “**The Triumphant Journey**,” previously recorded by **Arturo O’Farrill and the Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra**, paying tribute to Cuban composer and Arturo’s father **Chico O’Farrill**, as well as trumpeter **Dizzy Gillespie** and *conguero* **Chano Pozo**, respectively. Prieto also recorded several brand new compositions, including “**Una Vez Más**,” dedicated to **Eddie Palmieri** and trumpeter **Brian Lynch**. Other tracks include arrangements of Prieto’s “**Two for One**,” originally commissioned by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and premiered by his sextet at the 2012 Newport Jazz Festival, as well as “**The Sooner the Better**” and “**Prelude Para Rosa**” from his 2008 release, *Taking the Soul for a Walk*.

With this project, Prieto continues the tradition of drummers leading big bands, including **Chick Webb**, **Gene Krupa**, **Buddy Rich**, and **Mel Lewis**, among others. He has had longstanding relationships with champions of the big band sound, including Arturo O’Farrill, Eddie Palmieri, and the late **Bebo Valdés**.

“Cuban drumming phenom Dafnis Prieto scores big band gold with *Back to the Sunset*. He has taken his music a step further, writing and arranging a suite of big band charts that both pays homage to those who have inspired him while also blazing a trail forward into explosive new ground.” --**The Huffington Post**