

## 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 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Prieto’s own record label. Since then, the Big Band has performed to much acclaim at Carnegie Hall’s sold-out Zankel Auditorium, Duke University, the Savannah Music Festival, the Spoleto Festival USA, and the Newport and Northsea Jazz Festivals. Its crowning achievement was a **2018 Grammy Award for Best Latin Jazz Album**.

One of the leading musical voices of his generation, Prieto exclusively wrote and rearranged works of his own for the big band, 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**,

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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 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**.

#### **PRESS QUOTES:**

"One of the best recordings of the year" —**Down Beat Editors' Pick**

"A 17-piece big band ... alternately playing with heat and heart"  
—**Jazz Times Editor's Pick**

"The group pulls down snugly around [Prieto's] elaborate compositions, creating a fluid momentum in a range of styles" —**The New York Times**

"Expresses the sheer force and depth of field that only a big band can achieve"  
—**The Wall Street Journal**

"The success of [Prieto's] experiment is clear" —**WBGO**

"Big Band gold" —**The Huffington Post**

"Masterful" —**All About Jazz**

"Invigorating, imaginative, and rhythmically exhilarating" —**All About Jazz**

"The 17-member ensemble roars, rollicks, rumbas, and purrs its way through nine original pieces.... *Back to the Sunset* is a treasure" —**Step Tempest**

"Prieto’s gifts as a composer, arranger and ensemble-driving drummer are on full display throughout a set of swirling, color-filled compositions" —**Venice Magazine**