



CHRISTELLE DURANDY

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Christelle Durandy fuses Afro-Caribbean, jazz and other polyrhythmic sounds in a provocative exploration of the African diaspora's diffuse and powerful musical energy – a multicultural complexity Christelle herself embodies, having been raised in France by a mother from Reunion Island and a father from Guadeloupe.

Christelle currently fronts her Afro-Caribbean ensemble Sanktet (a play on the French phrase “cinq tetes,” or “five heads”) as well as the Grammy-winning Pacific Mambo Orchestra. She contributes her talents as writer, arranger and performer to the all-female World-Latin music collective Cocomama. Her vocals have been featured on diverse projects with such luminaries as John Santos, Paula West, George Mesterhaze, Jon Faddis, Pedrito Martinez, Baptiste Trotignon, Toshi Reagon, Allison Miller, Luis Enrique, Paul Carlon Octet, LaFrae Sci, Camille Thurman, Edward Perez, Ran Blake, John Benitez, Max Pollak RumbaTap, Ricky Ford and Ze Big Band, La India, Camille A. Brown, Dormeshia Sumbry-Edwards, Meklit Hadero, Carlos “El Bola” Betancourt and Millicent Jhonnie.

Ranging joyfully amongst forms as varied as Cuban son to Haitian kompa to traditional jazz, Christelle's border-transcendent music is rooted in the diversity of her ethnic background. She began performing at the age of five, joining the family band as it toured France: her father sang and played percussion, specializing in Gwo Ka, the traditional music of Guadeloupe, while her mother introduced her to jazz, along with the music and activism of the broader African diaspora. Under her parents' guidance, Christelle began developing the sophisticated musical skills that she later honed during her apprenticeship in Europe, Cuba, and the U.S.

Christelle draws upon this extensive education to connect with a variety of audiences, traditions and social issues. Her work explores and deepens a global conversation, moving fluently from the intricate clauses of contemporary jazz to the simplest, sincerest phrases of folk. This musical rigor, combined with her powerhouse vocals and fiercely passionate live performances, has garnered Christelle consistent critical praise whilst mesmerizing audiences worldwide.

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