

Grupo Yanqui

Bennett Paster and Gregory Ryan present Grupo Yanqui, a modern Latin jazz sextet. The band's repertoire skillfully balances Paster and Ryan's Afro-Cuban-, Brazilian-, and American-influenced compositions, with Latin-tinged arrangements of standard gems. Grupo Yanqui defies simple classification - it's Latin jazz; it's world groove; it's energetic music that forges the strengths of diverse individuals into an exciting, distinctly New York sound.

Pianist Paster and acoustic and electric bassist Ryan met in 1993 as faculty members of the Stanford Jazz Workshop. Several years later, at the same workshop, they were among the first Americans to meet and play with Cuban saxophonist Yosvany Terry Cabrera and percussionist Dafnis Prieto. The two pairs of friends, who developed their own styles of playing thousands of miles apart, came together and began an



photo by Allen Murabayashi

inspired new alliance. The resulting 2001 debut release, "Grupo Yanqui," was lauded by David Adler of All Music Guide for its "involved arrangements, passionate solos, and vigorous, spontaneous interplay, all with a melodic and cosmopolitan Latin funk touch. Highly recommended."

During the ensuing years, Grupo Yanqui performed concerts and festivals around the New York City metro area and California. In 2006, the band toured internationally as part of the prestigious U.S. State Department/Jazz at Lincoln Center "The Rhythm Road: American Music Abroad" program. Recorded on the heels of this tour, the group's new album, "Grupo Yanqui Rides Again," features a reconfigured line-up in a powerful program of six original songs and two re-arranged jazz standards.

In addition to Paster and Ryan, the new Grupo Yanqui personnel includes some of NYC's most acclaimed and accomplished musicians. In the front line, original Grupo member, saxophonist Chris Cheek, a noted leader in his own right, plies his bold melodicism while trumpeter Alex Norris, popular for his work with NYC Latin mainstay Manny Oquendo and Libre, brings fiery lines, unique arrangements and supportive clave and chekere playing to the band. Drummer Keith Hall readily switches between supportive and leading roles while percussionist Gilad, also an original band member

adds Latin, Middle-Eastern and Brazilian flavors and more to the musical salsa. (Though he does not perform on the newest CD, original member, saxophonist Yosvany Terry Cabrera, now among the most sought-after saxophonist/composer/bandleaders in NYC, frequently joins the band for performances.)

Grupo Yanqui's music is a synthesis of the member's individual cultural experiences, culminating in a new common musical culture. "Although a North American production," cited Cadence Magazine, Grupo Yanqui "...has all the savory taste of the islands and the Southern Hemisphere. This band regularly heats up the temperature and lays down a bountiful dose of syncopated vibrations." The sum of their myriad international inspirations, traditions, and roots is vibrant music that is on the vanguard of modern jazz in New York.

Promotional materials, detailed individual member bios and sound samples are available at www.grupoyanqui.com. Contact: info@grupoyanqui.com

Grupo Yanqui
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