

HORACIO "EL NEGRO" HERNANDEZ

www.elnegro.com

BIOGRAPHY

Drummer, composer, arranger and producer Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez has been a driving force behind some of the most popular and influential Latin and Latin-fused music of the past two decades. Since leaving Cuba in 1990 his drumming has propelled the efforts of Grammy Award winners Michel Camilo, Roy Hargrove, Chucho Valdes, Gary Burton, Alejandro Sanz and Carlos Santana, as well as Paquito D'Rivera and Gonzalo Rubalcaba. Hernandez is identified by his unique "Latin Fusion" style, melding the folkloric clave with the fierce punch, crisp snap and deep grooves of today's Jazz, Pop, and Rock.

Hernandez first gained international recognition as drummer for the legendary pianist Gonzalo Rubalcaba and his band, Proyecto. Once in the US, Hernandez - known internationally simply as "El Negro" - began contributing to some of the most extraordinary performances of the era, both live and in studio releases. Carlos Santana's *Supernatural* (1999), a nine Grammy Award winner; Alejandro Sanz' *No Es Lo Mismo* (2003), winner of four Grammy awards; Eddie Palmieri's *Listen Here!* (2005); Gary Burton's *For Hamp, Red, Bags, and Cal* (2001) all bear the stamp of El Negro's percussion artistry. His own awards include a shared Grammy with Crisol, Roy Hargrove's band on *Habana* (1997), as well as a Grammy for the 2003 *Live at the Blue Note*, with Michel Camilo on piano and Charles Flores on bass.



Negro's impact extends beyond the stage and the studio. He holds an honorary Doctorate of Music degree from Boston's prestigious Berklee College of Music, joining the ranks of Duke Ellington, Dizzy Gillespie, William "Count" Basie, Quincy Jones, Herbie Hancock, and other legends. A highly esteemed percussion educator, Negro also serves as a member of the faculties of Berklee and the New School and Drummer's Collective in New York. Then, his critically-acclaimed book and CD, *Conversations in Clave: The Ultimate Technical Study of Four-Way Independence in Afro-Cuban Rhythms* (2000), has become an industry standard.

Since 2004, in addition to his many other projects, Negro records and tours with Italuba—also the title of the group's debut CD release, and Italuba's second release *Italuba II* in 2007—his collaborative quartet. "We are at a point where we are letting the music play us, instead of us playing the music," he says of the ease with which the players relate and blend in a sophisticated compositional and improvisational musical dialogue. In 2011 Negro headlined at the Modern Drummer Festival for Modern Drummer Magazine with his new project band of World Music all-stars, The New World Order. The concert was subsequently released on the Modern Drummer Festival 2011 DVD. What will emerge next from the innovative El Negro is certain to continue to astonish, as it continues to reveal his dedication to the Cuban music that first fueled his brilliant and unique contribution to the world of contemporary music.

