

Norberto Ortiz García BIO

Norberto “Tiko” Ortiz García is a musician and professor of saxophone in both the Department of Jazz and Caribbean Music at the Conservatorio de Música de Puerto Rico and the Department of Music at the Universidad de Puerto Rico, Recinto de Río Piedras. Born in 1977, he grew up in Las Marías, where he first encountered the saxophone in his middle school band class at the Escuela Eugenio María de Hostos. In 1998, he moved to San Juan, the capital city, where he attended the Conservatorio de Música as an undergraduate at its original campus in Hato Rey and took classes with Ricardo Pons, Alejandro Avilés, Marco Pignataro, and Wilfredo Corps. In 2003, he received a Bachelor of Music in Saxophone Performance. In 2005, he graduated magna cum laude with a Master of Music degree in Jazz Performance from the Florida International University School of Music, where he had the opportunity to take classes with Gary Campbell, Dave Fernández, and Mike Orta.

His main influences in music are Joe Lovano and Joe Henderson, as well as fellow saxophonists David Sánchez and Miguel Zenón. Not only is Norberto a working jazz performer and educator, but a dedicated composer and music arranger as well. Together with drummer Raúl Maldonado and bassist Gabriel Rodríguez, he created San Juan Collective. The jazz trio released its first album in 2009 and is currently putting the finishing touches on their latest project, “Fuera de control”, which will feature collaborations with Christian Nieves (cuatro guitar) and Charlie Sepúlveda (trumpet), among others. Norberto also plays in the sextet Charlie Sepúlveda & the Turnaround, which received two consecutive Latin Grammy nominations for Best Latin Jazz Album of the Year in 2008 and 2009. The title track for that second nominated album, Sepúlveda Boulevard, was composed by Norberto. He also performed in percussionist Paoli Mejías’ 2011 Blu-ray disc titled “De Jazzambia a Mi Tambor, El Concierto” and played in bassist Aldemar Valentín’s second musical recording, titled “Ficciones”. That same year he was invited to participate in Banco Popular’s yearly TV, DVD, and CD Christmas special, which in 2011 was titled “Sonó, sonó” and featured the music of the much-celebrated composer Tite Curet Alonso. He was also featured on the “Chocolate Armenteros, The Cuban Swing” DVD.

Besides teaching, recording and playing at different local venues, “Tiko” Ortiz has also performed in national and international jazz festivals, such as Toros y Salsa (France, 2006), Jazz à Pointe-à-Pitre (Guadeloupe, 2007), Puerto Rico Heineken Jazz Fest (Puerto Rico, 2007 and 2008), Los Angeles Latin Jazz Festival (USA, 2009), Greater Hartford Connecticut Jazz Fest (USA, 2009), Jacksonville Jazz Festival (USA, 2010), Panama Jazz Festival (Panama, 2012), and DC Jazz Festival (USA, 2012). Norberto has played alongside the likes of Eddie Palmieri, Giovanni Hidalgo, Néstor Torres, Bernie Williams, Eddie Gómez, William Cepeda, Dave Valentín, and Luis “Perico” Ortiz. He currently lives in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

