

RICHIE ZELLON

Bio

RICHIE ZELLON (Guitarist, Composer,& Educator), was born in Lima, Peru of Brazilian and American parents. There he recorded his first album, "**Landologia**" in 1982 for the *Fonovox* label. The recording featured Zellon's unique compositions merging afro-peruvian music with jazz for the first time. Legendary American jazz musician, Jimmy Heath who met Zellon during one of his performances in Peru and was intrigued by his unique style, wrote the liner notes. Lima's leading newspaper, *El Comercio*, called it "*..a milestone in Peruvian contemporary music*".

After a brief period of classical composition studies with Edgar Valcarcel, at the time conductor of the Lima Symphony Orchestra, Zellon decided to pursue Jazz studies at Boston's prestigious *Berklee College of Music*. He also received private instruction from Pat Martino, Red Rodney and Charles Banacos. After leaving Boston, Zellon spent several years teaching privately and doing clinics at different Music Institutions throughout the US and Latin America.

In 1995 he established *Songosaurus Music*, a record label devoted to the promotion of new Latin Jazz artists from all over the continent. Among his critically acclaimed CDs are : "**Café con Leche**", "**The Nazca Lines**" (nominated for a *Grammy*) "**Metal Caribe**", "and "**The Afro-Peruvian Jazz Sessions**". They showcase a diversity of Latin rhythms covering not only the Brazilian and Afro Caribbean styles traditionally associated with the Latin Jazz genre, but also those pertaining to a variety of South American countries such as Argentina, Colombia, Venezuela, Uruguay and of course his native Peru. He has performed in clubs and jazz festivals throughout the US., Latin America, Europe and Israel.

In 1998 the first book to document the history of Latin Jazz, "*El Diccionario de Latin Jazz*" by Nat Chediak , devoted a chapter to Zellon's music. In 2000 a chapter in the French book on Latin Jazz, "*Caliente*" by Luc Delannoy was also dedicated to Zellon's work. It was entitled "*Richie Zellon: The Frank Zappa of Latin Jazz*". In addition he is profiled in the book "*Mixtura: jazz con sabor peruano*" by Jorge Olazo "*Cuban Fire: The Story of Salsa and Latin Jazz*" and "*Latin Jazz*", both by Isabelle Leymarie, "*Black Rhythms of Peru*" by Heidi Feldman, "*Jazz Jews*" by Mike Gerber and "*Oye Como Va*" by Jose Arteaga..

In the years following his national recording debut with the *Songosaurus* label, he has spent most of his time as producer for dozens of Latin Jazz CD projects. He has recorded and/or performed in the company of such world-class artists as Paquito D' Rivera, Alex Acuña, Danilo Perez, David Liebman, Dave Samuels, Sam Rivers, Jerry Bergonzi, Abraham Laboriel, Justo Almario, Bob Moses, George Garzone, Manfredo Fest, Jeff Berlin and David Amram among others.

From 2004 to 2007 he served as Professor of Jazz Guitar Studies at *Florida International University* in Miami prior to which he fulfilled the same position at the *University of South Florida* (Tampa,FL.). He also served on the faculty at *ARTI (Audio Recording Tech Institute)* in Orlando for 2 consecutive years. In addition to being a BMI writer and publisher, Zellon has been writing a regular column on Latin American music for "*Jazz Improv*" magazine since 1999.

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