



Rolando Matias
San Juan, Puerto Rico
Drums, Latin Percussion
Leader, Composer & Founder

Closed to a decade ago, Rolando conceptualize The Afro-Rican Ensemble, with a vision and direction the Ensemble followed to national and international recognition. As an entertainer and musician, Rolando cannot be denied: a Multi-talented percussionist, Afro-Caribbean musicologist, Ethno-Foklorist and an accomplished harmonica player. Rolando has traveled the U.S. playing in a wide variety of groups, performing everything from the blues to Latin rock, and everything in between. A self-taught musician, Rolando, applied his formal training as an Architect into his musical education, seeking perfection, has sought out the greats during his travels in order to perfect his musical techniques as a percussionist, harmonica player and composer. Rolando started playing percussion at a young age in Cupey Alto, at the local "Bembes" of the neighborhood. "Bembe" is a gathering of "rumberos" jamming and improvising together. "We started with percussion grooves, pretty soon a trombone player joined in, a trumpeter and all of a sudden the place was kicking, it was a great scene." Rolando has completed his musical education in music and composition thru private education and formal studies at The Ohio State University, School of Music. He also advanced his studies as a Master Percussionist in Cuba under the tutelage of a number Cuba's finest master percussionists from Havana and Matanzas. These studies completed Rolando's formal training as Master Percussionist on drums, hand drumming and ethnic percussion as well as a Jazz composer. His performances range from the playful to the passionate, making this powerful Puerto Rican presence a pleasure worth watching. Rolando has performed or recorded with the likes of 2007 Latin Grammy winner Brian Lynch, multi-grammy winner David Sanchez, Chuchito Valdez, Benny Maupin, Patrice Rushen, Leon "Ndugu" Chadler, Azar Lawrence, Othello Molineaux, guitarist Mimmi Fox, percussionists: Bobby Matos, Bobby Sanabria, Bill Summers and Lenny Castro, bluesmen: Eddie "The Chief" Clearwater, Kenny Neal, Duke Robillard, Australian Dave Hole, Debbie Davies and Howard Scott and the World Band, the late great pianist from Cleveland Roberto Ocasio, Brazilian reedman Carlos Malta, the B-3 madman Ron Levy, Pam Williams, trumpeters: Pharez Whitted, Derek Gardner and Latin Grammy nominee Ray Vega, Los Hombres Calientes, guitarist Jim Savitt, Hector Martignon, Greg Abate, Andy Gonzalez, Adela Dalto, Kim Pencyl, The Navigators , the master of the spoken word the legenday Umar Hassan from The Last Poets among others.

