

Biography and Discography of Andrea Brachfeld (USA)

I was brought up in a household where it was mandatory to take the piano. I studied it for 4 years starting at age 6 until I found out that you could take the flute in school and get out of class, so the flute it was! I have studied the flute since age 10. I entered the High School of Music and Art in 1969, majoring on the flute. There I met and played with **Noel Pointer**, **Nat Adderly Jr.**, **Dave Valentin**, **Buddy Williams**, among other fantastic musicians. Noel was instrumental (no pun intended) in teaching me how to write music down. I had a term paper I had to do for a Bible class and I waited until the last minute to do it. Finally I chose an excerpt from the Rose of Sharon and wrote music to the spoken word. Noel played the violin, I played the flute and **Michael Klein** played the piano. The teacher liked it so much that we performed it on TV as a plug to save the funding for Music and Art as they wanted to do away with the program and the school.

My first Jazz gig was at age 16 when I got a Jazz quartet together, wrote my own music, and played at the All Night Soul at St. Peter's Church, thanks to Reverend Gensel. From that point on improvisation became a way of life for me.

At that time Jazzmobile had workshops every Saturday morning where Jazz greats **Jimmy Heath**, **Billy Taylor**, among many others, gave their time to teach young people how to play Jazz. I was blessed to have Jimmy Heath as the flute teacher. He was not only a teacher of music but also taught me many things about life. I also went to the Jazz Interactions workshop, an organization run by **Joe Newman** and **Rigmor** at the time. There I met **Yusef Lateef** and **Barry Harris**. Barry always said that if you can't carry your instrument you shouldn't be playing it. Yusef was the flute teacher and he turned us on to different types of music including Eastern music.

In 1974, I was awarded the Louis Armstrong Award for outstanding Jazz student from Jazz Interactions. It came as a complete surprise! Along with the award came a \$500 scholarship to the college of my choice, and \$1000 if I attended the Berklee School of Music. I chose to go to the Manhattan School of Music as I wanted to learn how to play the flute well before I learned a specific style of music and at the time there were no flute teachers at Berklee. So, in 1973 I went to the Manhattan School of Music. There I studied with **Harold Bennett** and **Andrew Loyla**. I also took lessons from **Hubert Laws**, **Sam Baron**, **Eddie Daniels**, and **George Coleman**. Manhattan didn't have an extensive Jazz program at the time, but there were two ensembles. The first was led by **Dave Friedman** and the second by **Valerie Capers**. Dave's class was really laid back and I learned a lot. Valerie's class was great too. She is a phenomenal teacher. Other people who were at Manhattan at the time included **Kenny Kirkland**, **Fred Hersch**, **Angie Bofill**, **Noel Pointer**, and **Rodney Jones** among many others.

At some point or another we all played with each other. It was an incredible time to be in New York. During my stay at Manhattan I got involved in playing Charanga music. I was at a club called the Tin Palace down on the Bowery and my friend **Lloyd McNeil** was playing there with his band. I sat in and **Mauricio Smith** was in the audience. He came up to me afterwards and asked if I wanted to play in a



Charanga band. Work was work so I said sure. That was the beginning of my Afro-Cuban musical influences.

I played with **Tipica New York**, **The Benito Sextet**, **Charanga '76**, **Tipica Ideal**, **Charanga America**, **Joe Quijano**, and many other bands. I also sat in with **Tito Puente**, **Ray Barretto**, **Machito**, and others. There was so much music happening in those days. Each club would hire at least 3 bands a night and we were able to check each other out. It was great! While I was playing the Charanga gigs I also pursued my interest in Jazz. I always managed to put together groups for gigs. I have had **Frank and Jay Clayton**, **Charles Eubanks**, **Adam Nusbaum**, **Peter Fish**, **Jeff Andrews**, **Rob Schneiderman**, **Kenwood Dennard**, **Mark Helias**, **Frank Stagnitto**, **Tom Whaley**, among others as sidemen in my groups. After graduating Manhattan I continued playing wherever I could. One day I got a call from this

guy who spoke to me in Spanish. At the time I didn't understand a lot or speak it so I wasn't sure what he was saying. It ends up that he was offering me a gig to go to Venezuela. I thought that was ok so I said yes. Little did I know a 4 week gig was to turn into a 2 1/2 year one! I signed a contract with him to play in a popular typical Venezuelan band for a year. After that I got a gig in a club in Caracas playing Jazz six nights a week. One thing led to another and eventually I was doing jingles. Then I formed a Latin Jazz band. During this whole time I had been writing music but I didn't view myself as a composer. The band opened for a number of people including **Gary Burton**, **Paco Lucia** and lastly **Chick Corea**. By the last gig I was married and pregnant and ready to return home, which I did.

When I got back I found that there wasn't as much work as before and I realized that I wanted to devote more quality time to my family. So for the past 17 years I have always had some kind of musical group, but I always stayed local and low key so I could be there for my family. I returned to Graduate School where I earned my

Masters and I am now certified in six different areas. Upon completion of my educational pursuits I decided to change focus and redirect all my energies toward my music which brings me up to the present. I produced my own CD in 1999 after contacting many record companies. My energy from that point on has been dedicated to marketing, promotion, composing, and playing my music.

In the summer of 2000 I was signed with Spirit Nectar Records, a company out in San Francisco. The CD, "Remembered Dreams", my first CD, was released in May of 2001. In 2003 I was signed with Latin Cool Records and they released my 2nd CD, "Back With Sweet Passion" a Charanga Jazz CD for lack of a better description. That CD features the crème of the crop in the business including **Oscar Hernandez**, leader of the worldwide acclaimed **Spanish Harlem Orchestra**, **Alfredo de le Fe**, virtuosic Charanga violinist, and **Chembo Corniel**, master percussionist, among many other great musicians. Then in 2006 I released a project which I collaborated with Chembo Corniel called "Beyond Standards." This CD features **Hilton Ruiz**, **Steve Turre**, and **Pedrito Martínez**. We recorded mostly standards with our own kind of twist. Sadly, this happens to be one of the last CD's that Hilton recorded. At this point I am working on releasing my 4th CD, "Into the World: A Musical Offering." I am still teaching and loving it and feel blessed to have such a wonderful job. I am surrounded by wonderful people and the musicians I am playing with are the best.

Upon closing I would like to add that no matter what you are doing in your life, you have the ability to partake in the creative process. I was able to maintain my sanity and flow of the creative process cultivating and nurturing that idea. Everyday I feel blessed to be alive and

to be able to play the flute , compose my music, and continue to grow in whatever direction I am taken.



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TITLE	THEME	LABEL	YEAR
1. NOEL POINTIER	1.	1.	1. 1972
2. EDDIE CARPENTER	2.	2.	2. 1972
3. DAVID DURRAH	3.	3.	3. 1973
4. TIPICA NEW YORK	4.	4.	4. 1974
5. BENITO SEXTET	5.	5.	5. 1975
6. CHARANGA 76	6.	6. TR Records	6. 1976
7. CHARANGA 76	7.	7. TR Records	1977
8. CHARANGA AMERICA	8.	8. El Sonido Records	1978
9. ANDREA (Leader)	9.	9. Latina Records	1978
10. LA INMENZA	10.	10. Discomoda Records	1980
11. VITAS BRENNER	11.	11.	1981
12. CULEBRA	12.	12.	1981
13. LA INMENZA	13.	13. Discomoda Records	1982
14. .ORQ. TROPICAL ENSUEÑO	14.	14.	1982
15. CHARANGA '76	15.	15. TR Records	1983
16. WILLIE MORENO	16.	16.	2003
17. Grupo CHAWORO-Chembo Corniel	17.	17.	2003
18. TIMBALAYE-Ralph Irizarry IT'S TIME	18. "NO PUEDE HABER TRISTEZA"	18. BKS Records	2003
19. AFRICANDO	19.	19.	2003
20. GENE AMATO BIG BAND	20.	20.	2003
21. REMEMBERED DREAMS (Leader)	21. Latin Cool Records	21. Latin Cool Records	2003
22. BACK WITH SWEET PASSIONS (L)	22. "AFRO BLUE"	22. Latin Cool Records	2008
23. VICTOR RENDON (Fiesta Percusiva)	23.	23. VR-Tortilla Flat Music 2008	2006
24. WAYNE WALLACE	24.	24.	2006
25. BEYOND STANDARDS (Leader)	25.	25.	2007
26. CHEMBO CORNIEL	26.	26.	2008
27. Into The World: A MUSICAL OFFERING (Leader)	27. "WATCH YOUR WALLET", "THE GHANAN TRAIL", "NAOMI'S FANTASY"	27. Shaneye Records	2010
28.	28.	28.	
29. STEVE POUCHIE (THE BRIDGE/EL PUENTE)	29.	29. LatinJazzAliveRecordsLLC	

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