

# MYTHOLOJAZZ

## Program Notes

Written and performed by David Gonzalez  
Music composed by D.D. Jackson  
Directed by Lenard Petit

MytholoJazz was first presented by the New 42nd St., Inc. at the New Victory Theater in March 1999.

A memory...PS 102 in the Bronx. It is 1968 and Mrs. Latrelle, our tall and eloquent English teacher, reads the tragedy of Orpheus and Eurydice to my sixth grade class. I remember feeling confused and irritated by it. Why does Orpheus turn back to the underworld? Who is this guy? This is more than a fable, more than a legend, more than a folktale. This myth -- the word was new and charged with powers -- was a different kind of story, for it stirred the depths of my imagination.

Since that time long ago I have read many versions of Orpheus and Eurydice, I've seen films, heard operas and musicals, and read poems that re-told it or were inspired by Orpheus' extraordinary adventure. Each presentation adding a new angle from which to view and experience this many-faceted jewel of ancient literature.

Orpheus has been interpreted in many musical styles and genres, including samba and bossa nova in "Black Orpheus", and classical music in Stravinski's opera "Orfeo". My musical roots are in blues, rock, and especially, jazz. I heard John Coltrane's "Giant Steps" LP when I was twelve and from then on "America's classic music", was in my blood. LPs from Wes Montgomery, Herbie Hancock, Sun Ra, Stan Getz, Billie Holiday, Duke Ellington and Al Jarreau sat along with Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, Elmore James and Memphis Slim on my record table. The grooves, the risks, the sorrows and the joys of jazz informed me, and inspired me. With all this jazz bubbling under my skin I knew that Orpheus could not gently pluck the strings of a distant gilded harp, no, he had to be a swinging, hard blowing saxophonist.

For me, Orpheus and Eurydice is a journey into the inner life of the artist.

MytholoJazz is the realisation of a dream that I have held for a long time. DD Jackson and I talked a lot about these stories, we studied the characters and tried to find music that was swinging and "moving" at the same time. DD's rich compositions and stunning piano playing fit the feeling tone of these tales.