

## *Mike Freeman*

Musician \* Composer \* Bandleader \* Recording Artist \* Arranger \* Educator \* Producer

*"masterful", "a superb vibes player", "wildly talented"*

Vibraphonist and composer, **Mike Freeman**, has been entrenched in the New York jazz and Latin music scene for over three decades. Energetic, rhythmic, soulful, and melodic, his performances have taken him from North America and Europe to the Azores, Caribbean, and South America. His seven recordings of original music (ranging from jazz, Latinjazz, salsa, Brazilian, fusion, and R&B) have gained national and international attention and received extensive radio airplay charting on jazz, contemporary jazz, and World Music radio. "Venetian Blinds" with music for El Rey (The King) Tito Puente and NEA Jazz Master Bobby Hutcherson is the latest in a line of clave infused recordings Mike has produced over the past 18 years. His previous release "Blue Tjade" was a tip of the hat to Cal Tjader.

**Past performance highlights** for Mike as a leader include the Trinidad & Tobago Steelpan & Jazz Festival; Festival Internacional (Tercera, Azores); Central Park's Harlem Meer concert series in New York City; performing for Flood Relief in Des Moines, Iowa; Joslyn Art Museum's Jazz on the Green in Omaha, NE; the Berks, Rehoboth Beach, Hennessy Greenwich Village, and JVC Newport (at Saratoga) jazz festivals; International Association of Jazz Educators (IAJE) Convention, as well as an extensive tour of Portugal, cosponsored by the Fulbright Foundation and the American Embassy (USIA), where he received the Medal of the City of Guarda.

**Other endeavors** include producing "Band Together2" a benefit concert for musicians affected by hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria (Puerto Rico in particular) with proceeds going to the Jazz Foundation of America and "Band Together" a Hurricane Katrina Benefit Concert for the Tipitinas Foundation benefiting New Orleans-area musicians. Mike wrote a series, spanning more than a decade, of commissioned compositions and arrangements for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's Percussion Scholarship Program and in 2014 was commissioned by the late drummer/educator Ed Uribe to write arrangements for a national percussion curriculum for China that were performed by members of the Shanghai Symphony at Shanghai Symphony Hall.

**Mike is also widely known** for his work and recordings with several acclaimed Latin groups. The vibes behind the name, his has worked extensively with legendary percussionist Ray Mantilla's Good Vibrations Band, which toured Italy far and wide. Ray's latest cd "High Voltage" includes Mike and "Good Vibrations" (both on Savant Records) was Jazzweek's top Latinjazz recording on radio, 2006. He was part of Lucho Cueto's all-star group Black Sugar, "Estamos Azucar", which gave blockbuster performances for thousands at the Toros Y Salsa Festival in Dax, France, and at the Festival Internacional de Salsa in Lima, Peru. For close to fifteen years he been a member of Jose Mangual Jr.'s Son Boricua featuring the late Jimmy Sabater (one of the architects of Boogaloo) that performed for large gatherings at salsa congresses in New York, L.A., and Atlanta. His vibe work can also be heard on recordings with Mark Holen's eclectic Latin blues band Zambomba. In the 1990's he was often heard in New York with Jorge Jimenez's salsa group Timba Vibes, having created the groups book, followed by an over 15 year association with salsa singer Julio Salgado. He performed with the Spanish Harlem Orchestra (directed by Oscar Hernandez) at Madison Square Garden and with Willie Villegas's Joe Cuba Sextet for New Jersey's salsa congress both with legendary sonero Cheo Feliciano.

**Born and raised in Omaha, Nebraska**, Mike Freeman started learning drums at age five and began playing professionally at age thirteen. At twelve, he began playing the vibraphone, and by fifteen, he was a percussionist for the Omaha Symphony under conductor Thomas Briccetti. During his last year of high school, he began traveling to Chicago to study with renowned percussionist and veteran studio musician Bobby Christian. He graduated DePaul University with a Bachelor of Music composition with high honors in 1981. In New York, where he's lived and worked since, he studied with composer/arranger Hale Rood, (who wrote for Louie Bellson).

**Family:** Mike's grandfather was a drummer and leader of Ron Freeman and the Melody Masters, a popular band that was heard on the radio in the Midwest. Neal Hefti played in his band before becoming famous in California. Mike's paternal grandmother sang and played the organ and marimba. His maternal grandmother was a talented piano player in her youth. Mike's father, Harry Freeman, worked his way through college playing the saxophone and clarinet.

*"Latin jazz doesn't get any better than this" –Mark Sullivan, Allaboutjazz* [Mike endorses Mike Balter Mallets](#)

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## RECORDINGS AS LEADER

Mike Freeman ZonaVibe - *Venetian Blinds*  
VOF recordings, coming April 2018

Mike Freeman ZonaVibe - *Blue Tjade*  
VOF recordings, Dec 2015

Mike Freeman ZonaVibe - *The Vibesman*  
VOF recordings, 2012

Mike Freeman ZonaVibe - *In The Zone*  
VOF recordings, 2007

Mike Freeman - *Wiggle Stomp*  
VOF recordings, 2000

Mike Freeman & Spellbound® - *Street Shuffle*  
Best Recordings, 1991

Mike Freeman & Spellbound,  
Debut recording, 1985

Mike's recordings of original music have appeared on numerous radio charts, syndicated radio programs (WOR radio network, Jazz after Hours, David Sanborn, Music Choice, United Airlines), received outstanding reviews, been both Grammy and Latin Grammy entries.

## Based in New York City since 1981

\*Artist/Clinician Balter Mallets and formerly Musser Instrument Company

**Commissioned arrangements and compositions** for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's Percussion Scholarship Program (for over a decade) and for a national percussion curriculum for China 2014

**Produced** Band Together a hurricane Katrina benefit concert for Tipitina's Foundation and Band Together2 a benefit concert following hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria for the Jazz Foundation of America.

## Clinics/Masterclasses/Residencies

- \*Florida International University
- \*New York University
- \*Berklee College of Music, MA
- \*Ithaca College, NY

## CONCERTS AS LEADER

- ▶ Trinidad & Tobago Steelpan & Jazz Festival
- ▶ Festival Internacional, Terceira, Azores
- ▶ First Night Celebrations (numerous)
- ▶ IAJE International Convention, Atlanta
- ▶ Rehoboth Beach, DE, Jazz Festival
- ▶ Berks Jazz Festival
- ▶ JVC Newport Jazz Festival
- ▶ Hennessy Greenwich Village Jazz Festival
- ▶ NJ State Aquarium's Jazzin' the Deep Festival
- ▶ Penn Sate University tour
- ▶ Toured Portugal on grants from the Fulbright Foundation and the American Embassy (USIA)

## Groups:

- ★ Mike Freeman ZonaVibe
- ★ Mike Freeman Vibe Caliente
- ★ Mike Freeman & Spellbound®

## Associated groups:

- ★ Ray Mantilla Good Vibrations Band
- ★ Lucho Cueto (Allstar) Black Sugar
- ★ Son Boricua with Jimmy Sabater
- ★ Boricua Blues with Jose Mangual Jr.
- ★ Mark Holen Zambomba
- ★ Julio Salgado
- ★ Willie Villegas' Joe Cuba Sextet
- ★ Tito Gomez
- ★ Timba Vibes

**Studio sessions for** Kirsten Thien; The Manhattan Transfer *Swing*, Atlantic Records; Don Sebesky Foxwoods, *The Wonder of It All*, featuring John Pizzarelli Jr; Broadway stars Stephanie Pope, *Now's the Time to Fall in Love*, and Capathia Jenkins with Lou Rosen, *South Side Stories*; and Hale Rood among others.

**Performed** with the Spanish Harlem Orchestra, directed by Oscar Hernandez at Madison Square Garden, and Willie Villegas Joe Cuba Sextet at NJ Salsa Congress both with legendary sonero Cheo Feliciano; Latin Legends Tribute Concert at Aaron Davis Hall with Louis Bauzó; Cuban Fantasy at Weill Hall with Kathleen Landis