



## The Afro-Peruvian Sextet Bio

“The Afro-Peruvian Sextet is writing a new chapter in the history of Latin jazz.” --Doug Ramsey, *Riffides*

The Afro-Peruvian Sextet was formed in January of 2005. Composer and trumpet player Gabriel Alegría made a long distance phone call to drummer Hugo Alcázar, his long time friend and band mate. “I have an idea and I need someone who can dance,” said Gabriel... and since that time the Afro-Peruvian Sextet has produced two albums and has performed more than 400 shows in North America and Perú. Their audiences come from all over the globe and include a legion of dedicated fans who work directly with the band on various projects including concert promotion, merchandise sales and most notably, *Tour Perú*, a successful concept by which fans of the band literally join the musicians on the road in Perú.

One couple in 2008, inspired by the Tour Perú experience, built and currently operates Tutuma Social Club, a jazz club in New York City themed after the band’s brand of Afro-Peruvian jazz music. The venue has become the Sextet’s “home away from home” where the band continually nurtures their relationship with audiences each weekend, promotes CDs and merchandise and enjoys sharing food from Perú with their fans. The band has successfully developed and consolidated a thriving “scene” around its music. The Latin Jazz Network described Gabriel Alegría in this way: “Every once in awhile there comes a musician who, when playing his or her chosen instrument, seems to carry within a vital life-force that is irrepressible.” The “life-force” projected by the Sextet is often cited as the secret of the band’s popular appeal.

Amidst the Afro-Peruvian Sextet’s detailed fusion of Afro-Peruvian rhythms and jazz harmonies, lies a very authentic, “earthy” and honest interpretation. The New York Times writes “on his sharp new album, trumpeter Gabriel Alegría teases out affinities between modern jazz and the African-influenced coastal music of his native Peru.” The extremes of Afro-Peruvian folklore from the coast and the spirit of jazz music coexist in a balance that is only possible by combining the types of charismatic (and idiosyncratic!) musicians that make up the Afro-Peruvian Sextet. “Peruvian trumpeter Gabriel Alegría champions Afro-Peruvian music,” wrote Downbeat Magazine in a prominent review, “the hip asymmetrical bass line of Alegría’s *El Norte* is goaded by wonderful hand percussion and stickmanship on cajita from Hugo Alcázar and Freddy “Huevito” Lobatón.”

Freddy “Huevito” Lobatón, founding member of the band, is one of the most important masters and exponents of Afro-Peruvian percussion and a three-time national Peruvian zapateo dancing champion. In the Afro-Peruvian Sextet’s recordings and performances, he can be heard alternating between traditional instruments such as the cajón, the cajita and the quijada (that’s the jaw bone of an ass!). Drummer Hugo Alcázar creates a type

of drumming that superimposes polyrhythm and jazz swing feel naturally, all while seated on a cajón and incorporating those sounds into the drum set's color palette. These significant contributions are placed in the context of melodic jazz writing by Gabriel Alegría and Laura Andrea Leguía, also the band's tenor saxophonist. Time Out New York describes the music as "pieces full of color and drive, reflecting an immersion in the black music of Peru's coastal regions." The bass chair is currently occupied by 5-time grammy award winner John Benitez and the "llanto" (crying) of the acoustic guitar by Peruvian criollo guitarist Yuri Juárez, himself winner of Latin Jazz Corner's "guitar player of the year" award. The band also boasts a talented roster of additional musicians that have played, performed and recorded with the band at different times. Everyone that comes into the Afro-Peruvian Sextet becomes an important part of the band's musical family.

The band has even been described by many fans as "life changing". Legendary trumpeter Bobby Shew said it best: "hanging out with these folks is a chapter in your life!"

Support for the band in their native Perú is also significant. Hundreds of dedicated "Fans & Voluntarios" sign up on each of the band's tours to work shows, sell merchandise and participate in the band's social outreach missions. Local media and press have followed and documented the development of the band. The country's most important newspaper, El Comercio describes the Afro-Peruvian Sextet as "the catalyst that marks the start of Afro-Peruvian jazz music's flight to the international stage."

The Sextet is busy working towards future projects that include our next Tour Perú, launching a Live Recording and staging a seven continent 2012-2013 World Tour. Current performances are listed on our tour calendar. Opportunities for fan participation abound so drop the band a line or join us on Facebook or Twitter!