

TD Jazz Concerts

Danilo Pérez, John Patitucci, and Brian Blade

Saturday, April 25, 2026 at 8pm

This is the 1,524th concert in Koerner Hall

Danilo Pérez, piano

John Patitucci, bass

Brian Blade, drums

April May Webb, vocals

Jane Bunnett, soprano saxophone & flute

Tara Davidson, alto & soprano saxophone, flute & clarinet

Allison Au, alto & soprano saxophone, flute & clarinet

Taylor Maslin, tenor & soprano saxophone, clarinet & bass clarinet

Fall Raye, tenor & soprano saxophone, & clarinet

Conrad Gluch, baritone & soprano saxophone, clarinet & bass clarinet

Andrew McAnsh, trumpet

Matt Smith, trumpet

Kevin Turcotte, trumpet

Rebecca Hennessy, trumpet

Karl Silveira, trombone

Zach Smith, trombone

Charlotte McAfee Brunner, trombone

The Panáfrica Suite: Echoes from the Isthmus (Canadian premiere)

A musical journey honouring Africa's enduring spirit in Panamá and the Americas.

"Telling a story that is a fundamental pillar of our country's identity through composition has challenged me to explore and imagine new sounds. Composing *The Panáfrica Suite* has been both a joy and a creative adventure – a way to honor Afro-Panamanian heritage, celebrate resilience, and give life to the living spirit of Africa in the Americas. This work connects music and words, allowing message and melody to rise together."

- Danilo Pérez

Movement I – Afro-Panamanian Roots

- *Bayano's Landing* – Ancestral memory and the birth of identity
- *Cimarrón Spirit* – Strength and resilience rising from refuge

Movement II – Echoes of the Canal

- *Between Two Worlds* – Cultures collide, borders blur, new identities emerge
- *Wonder of the World* – Sacred hands shaping land and bearing sacrifice

Movement III – Panamá

- *Echoes of the Isthmus* – Ancestral whispers guiding footsteps
- *Panamá: Land of the Butterflies* – Transformation, pride, rebirth

We are Africa in the Americas.

Esto es Panamá.

Closing: Communal Song

“Ola, ola, ola de la mar,
mi santa se está quemando
por falta de agua.
Ola, ola, ola de la mar,
mi santa se está quemando
por falta de agua.”
This is Panamá.
Esto es Panamá.

Gratitude & Inspiration

We give heartfelt gratitude to our ancestors, whose lives and stories continue to guide and inspire us.
Patricia Zárate, for *Cultural Narratives: Reimagining Panama’s Musical and Cultural Narratives of Jazz*.

Danilo Pérez

As a solo artist and as a collaborator with jazz giants from Dizzy Gillespie to Wayne Shorter, for over three decades Grammy Award-winning Panamanian pianist-composer Danilo Pérez has been lauded as one of the most creative forces in contemporary music. With jazz as the anchoring foundation, his global jazz music is a blend of Panamanian roots, Latin American folk music, West African rhythms, and European impressionism – promoting music as a borderless and multidimensional bridge between all people.

Since 1993, Pérez has released 12 albums which have earned him critical acclaim and numerous accolades around the world. He is a recipient of the Doris Duke Artist Award in 2021, United States Fellowship 2018, and the 2009 Smithsonian Legacy Award. For nearly two decades, Pérez was part of the Wayne Shorter Quartet, alongside bassist John Patitucci and drummer Brian Blade. This latest iteration with Shorter was known as a unique and predominant force in improvisational music both at their historic live performances and on several recordings. In 2018 Blue Note records released the highly anticipated *Emanon* from the Wayne Shorter Quartet which won a Grammy in the category of Best Jazz Instrumental album in 2019.

John Patitucci

Acoustic and electric bassist John Patitucci has been at the forefront of the jazz world for the last 30+ years. He is a four-time Grammy Award winner, has been nominated over 20 times, and has played on many other Grammy Award-winning recordings. He has performed and/or recorded with jazz giants such as Dizzy Gillespie, Wayne Shorter, Herbie Hancock, Chick Corea, Stan Getz, Freddie Hubbard, Roy Haynes, Wynton Marsalis, Michael Brecker, Kenny Garrett, Victor Feldman, and Nancy Wilson. John has also performed and/or recorded with pop artists such as Natalie Cole, John Mayer, Alicia Keys, Joni Mitchell, Bono, Sting, Norah Jones, James Taylor, Carole King, and Paul Simon. An active composer with 18 solo recordings of his own, he has been commissioned to write for various chamber music groups. His composition *Hypocrisy* was premiered by the Royal Conservatory Orchestra along with Danilo Pérez, Brian Blade, and Mr. Patitucci. After touring with the award-winning Wayne Shorter Quartet for over 20 years, John continues to tour with his own projects, including the John Patitucci Electric Guitar Quartet, his Brazilian Trio, and the John Patitucci Trio featuring saxophonist Chris Potter and drummer Brian Blade.

Brian Blade

A thoughtful drummer, bandleader, and composer, Brian Blade participates in myriad jazz projects and has an ear for rootsy introspection and cross-genre exploration. The Fellowship Band was formed in 1997 and, since then, they have released seven albums. Their debut in 1998, *Brian Blade Fellowship*, was followed by *Perceptual* in 2000, *Season of Changes* in 2008, *Landmarks* in 2014, *Body and Shadow* in 2017, *Live From the Archives* in 2022, and *Kings Highway* in 2023. Also in January 2023, Blade and a septet named Life Cycles issued their album, *Now! And Forever More: Honoring Bobby Hutcherson* on his own Stoner Hill Records and Press. Blade spent 20 years with Pérez and Patitucci in the Wayne Shorter Quartet.

April May Webb

April May Webb is an award-winning vocalist, composer, and educator and the 2024 winner of the Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Vocal Competition. She made history as the first Black woman to graduate from The William Paterson University Jazz Education program and she later co-founded Sounds of April & Randall with her husband, trumpeter Randall Haywood – a boundary-pushing ensemble blending jazz with gospel, R&B, country, and global influences from their international tours. Their debut album peaked at #14 on the National Jazz Week Charts, with the single “Horizon” reaching #17 on *Billboard’s* Contemporary Jazz Charts. Their 2021 album, *Questions Left Unanswered*, climbed to #12 on *Jazz Week*. April May has performed with jazz legends T.S. Monk and NEA Jazz Master Terri Lyne Carrington. She was also selected as a Woodshed Network Artist, an exclusive program founded by Dee Dee Bridgewater to support women in jazz. Additionally, she has been inducted into the Newton Fine Arts Hall of Fame.

Jane Bunnett

Five-time Juno Award winner Jane Bunnett has turned her bands and recordings into showcases for the finest musical talent from Canada, the US, and Cuba. She has been nominated for three Grammy Awards, received The Order of Canada, The Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Medal, and, most recently, The Premier’s Award for Excellence. Known for her creative integrity, improvisational daring, and courageous artistry, her exploration of Afro-Cuban melodies expresses the universality of music, and her ability to embrace and showcase the rhythms and culture of Cuba has been ground-breaking. She has toured the world bringing her own special sound to numerous jazz festivals, displaying her versatility as a flutist, saxophone player, and pianist.

Two documentaries have been made about Bunnett’s work: *Spirits of Havana* was presented at numerous film festivals internationally, on television (CBC, PBS), and in Europe. A more recent film, *Embracing Voices*, has been shown at film festivals and is awaiting commercial release.

As an educator, spokesperson, and social activist, Jane remains unafraid to explore uncharted territory in her quest for excellence.

Wayne Shorter (August 25, 1933 – March 2, 2023) was an American saxophonist, composer, and bandleader. Over his 65-year career, he played with Art Blakey and Miles Davis, and co-founded Weather Report. For the last 20 years of his life, he toured with Danilo, John, and Brian. His final Canadian concert was on April 22, 2017, in Koerner Hall.

Danilo Pérez and Jane Bunnett made their Royal Conservatory debuts during Koerner Hall’s inaugural concert season – Pérez on March 27, 2010, and Bunnett on April 17, 2010. John Patitucci and Brian Blade made their Conservatory debuts on May 4, 2013. This is Bunnett’s eighth appearance in Koerner Hall; and Pérez’s, Patitucci’s, and Blade’s sixth. April May Webb is making her Conservatory debut.