

For immediate release: July 18, 2018

Media contact: edris@brava.org

Brava presents
Bobi Céspedes Band in Concert with Pellejo Seco
with special guest John Santos



Saturday, August 18, 2018

Brava Theater Center

Tickets \$20 – \$50

VIP reception – 6:30pm

Doors open – 7:00pm

Concert – 8:00pm

A sonera of the classic Cuban style and a priestess of the Yorùbán diaspora, Gladys “Bobi” Céspedes has been at the forefront of representing and promoting Cuban music in the Bay Area and the United States for over 40 years. Bobi first won international recognition as director and lead singer for Conjunto Céspedes, which was recognized as an early exponent of world music for their unique approach to Cuban dance music, incorporating jazz elements and folkloric idioms with the Cuban son. Bobi Céspedes’ electrifying ensemble features some of the Bay area’s finest Latin Jazz musicians: Musical director, Marco Díaz on piano, trumpet and vocals; bassist Saúl Sierra-Alonso; Julio Pérez on bongos and percussion; José Roberto Hernández on guitar and vocals; Lichi Fuentes on vocals, chekeré, and guiro, and special guest John Santos on

Joining Bobi Céspedes on the bill is one of the Bay Area’s most inventive Cuban bands Pellejo Seco, which draws on Afro-Cuban folklore and the latest Havana dance music, Latin jazz and flamenco, bossa nova and jazz/rock fusion.

A portion of the theater will be cleared for a dance floor, so come ready to groove to the sounds of Afro-Cuba and beyond!

“A Cuban powerhouse of a woman who demonstrates on record and in concert that she is the worthy successor to the throne of Celia Cruz.” – LA Times

--

Orisha Oyá Workshop with Bobi Céspedes
Sunday, August 19 – 2pm
Brava Cabaret

Drawing on sacred songs and stories from Yoruba mythology, Bobi Céspedes, will lead a workshop exploring the mystery and significance of Orisha Oyá, who represents the wind. Since the wind is always fluctuating, Oyá is associated with change and can transform at a moment's notice—from a gentle breeze at the seashore to a devastating hurricane. Recognized as a warrior, she is queen of the spirits, and a bridge between the living and the dead. In this workshop, through chants sung in a call and response pattern, we will praise Oyá's prowess and appeal for positive transformations in our lives.

Tickets
\$20 advanced
\$25 at door

--

ARTIST BIOS

Gladys “Bobi” Céspedes

Gladys “Bobi” Céspedes has been at the forefront of representing and promoting Cuban music in the Bay Area and the United States for over 40 years. A vocalist in the Cuban son tradition, composer, band leader and educator, Bobi first won international recognition as director and lead singer for Conjunto Céspedes. The band was recognized as an early exponent of world music for their unique approach to Cuban dance music, incorporating jazz elements and folkloric idioms with the Cuban son. With them she recorded 4 albums, including *Una Solo Casa* and *Vivito Y Coleando* which won awards for Latin Album of the Year in 1993 and 1995 from the National Association of Independent Records Distribution (NAIRD). Conjunto Céspedes toured nationally and internationally, winning raving reviews in every major city where they performed, and opening for such notable stars as Celia Cruz, Tito Puente, Ruben Blades, Tito Puente, El Gran Combo, Los Van Van and Brian Ferry.

Bobi gained a wider audience touring and recording with Grateful Dead drummer Mickey Hart's Planet Drum and Bembé Orisha projects, appearing on his *Supralingua* and *Spirit into Sound* releases.

Since 2003, working in a septet format, Bobi has continued to perform and tour, and recorded two albums under her own name: *Rezos* on Six Degree Records, and *Patakin* on VL Sounds.

Rezos, a blend of Cuban son and electronic beats, included the track “Awoyo,” a composition featured in season 4 of the smash Showtime series *Dexter*. (Other film credits include Les Blank’s *Sworn to the Drum*, and Peter Bratt’s, *Follow Me Home*. Her recording with Conjunto Céspedes, *Na’ Ni Na’*, was part of the soundtrack for the 2006 film *Half Nelson*).

Bobi is proud to have been invited to perform at the Freedom Sounds Celebration for the dedication of the National Museum of African American History and Culture in September 2016, sharing the bill with such illustrious world music divas as Angélique Kidjo and Meshell Ndegeocello.

Bobi’s music integrates Cuban folkloric and modern elements in an authentic and distinctive sound. Her resonant voice and dynamic stage presence lead audiences on a journey from Yoruba incantations to the Cuban son. She can belt out a rumba or move you to tears through a heart wrenching rendition of a classic bolero. Along the way she shares her narratives of family life and love, and the wisdom of Afro Cuban fables. Always present is her *chambo*—that vibrant Cuban soul—resilient and creative.

An offspring of a large Cuban musical family that kept alive African beliefs and practices and Lucumí priestess for over 50 years, Bobi has played an essential role in bringing Afro-Cuban rhythms and rituals to the Bay Area for nearly half a century. By providing fresh ways for contemporary audiences to be touched by Cuban music, she furthers the legacy of the great soneras, Celia Cruz and Omara Portuondo. “Ms Céspedes’ voice is supreme: powerful, full of strength, even when she whispers...” (Descarga.com). In the rich field of Cuban music, Bobi Céspedes stands out as a gem and can rightfully be considered one of our national cultural treasures.

Bobi Céspedes’ electrifying ensemble features some of the Bay area’s finest Latin Jazz musicians: Musical director, Marco Díaz on piano, trumpet and vocals; bassist Saúl Sierra-Alonso; conguero Carlos Caro; Julio Pérez on bongos and percussion; José Roberto Hernández on guitar and vocals; and Lichi Fuentes on vocals, chekeré, and guiro.

Pellejo Seco is a highly inventive Cuban band founded in the East Bay. The band’s name is partly a tribute to the hard lives of farmworkers and their sun scorched skin and also Havana street slang with multiple sexual allusions. The band’s sound has been described as a world fusion band but composer and creator Ivan Camblor founded the band as a vehicle for traditional Cuban Son and his original songs make up the bulk of their repertoire. The band’s music draws on Afro-Cuban folklore and the latest Havana dance music in an eclectic blend of flamenco, cumbia, bossa nova, with a hint of jazz and a dose of hip-hop - all in service to traditional Cuban Son.