



Afro-Latin Music and Dance

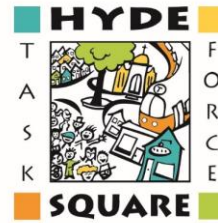
Lead Artist Roberto Chao, with Hyde Square Task Force and Boston's Latin Quarter

Mural at Mozart Park, Jamaica Plain, Boston, MA

Completed: November 5, 2022

In the first mural, from left to right, you see the African Continent as an electrical circuit, a connected region full of hope, music and dynamism. This panel features the African Queen Miriam Makeba from South Africa; Fatoumata Diawara from Mali; Fela Kuti from Nigeria, an icon of the contemporary musical scene; the young African generation's Nigerian Fire Boy; the young female singer Eli Zaelo from Pretoria; and the extraordinary Cesaria Evora from Cape Verde. In addition, a map of the American continent is presented with many of the names of today's Afro-American musical rhythms and dances that originated in the African Continent.

The next Blues and Jazz panel is represented by many musical icons and legends. This panel features a darker background as Blues and Jazz were performed mostly indoors in New Orleans and other parts of the South, in theatres or night venues. We feature here: Louis Armstrong (Satchmo); Miles Davies; Dizzy Gillespie recognized as the Latin-Jazz influencer; Nina Simone; bassist Ron Carter, Aretha Franklin; James Brown; Rapper LL Cool J; bassist and Berklee graduate Esperanza Spalding; and Michael Jackson. They are accompanied by Break dancers, a representation of Alvin Ailey dancers, and several musical instruments



and devices. Technological advancements in the music scene gives an idea of the passage of time, and a majestic image of piano keys unifies the whole panel composition while directing us towards Boston's present featuring Wally's Café and a grand piano.

In the Caribbean section musical scenes are presented mostly outdoors, in the sunlight and usually close to the sea. We feature here: Queen Celia Cruz from Cuba; the Buena Vista Social Club's lead singer Omara Portuondo; a young couple dancing Latin rhythms under a tree; Boston's own Boricua Jorge Arce (a legend in Boston and P.R., performing Bomba and Plena) and his daughter Charmaine Santiago dancing; Dominican accordionist Fefita La Grande; Dominican Johnny Ventura, the father of the Merengue rhythm; and dancers from the Hyde Square Task Force. A "Vejigante" mask is presented, as is the lush Caribbean landscape and its turquoise waters, along with more typical musical instruments.

In the last panel, more Afro-Caribbean rhythms and scenes are represented: Bob Marley as an intrinsic part of the Caribbean music scene; an Andaluz dancer demonstrating Spain's dance influence; Boston's Fabiola Méndez, a Boricua former Berklee student and renowned cuatro player; folk dancers, and more natural images. Moving from right to left there is also: the very prolific Dominican Juan Luis Guerra, also a Berklee graduate; an Olmec Pre-Columbian (Mexico, 1200 BC) statue giving context to the Afro immigration before Europeans came to the Americas; DJ Ed Word Galán from Dominican Republic with the original mobile "A Trike Called Funk" performing at the Mozart Park; and a Tango dance couple, showing that sensual and



elaborate dance form. Finally, from Puerto Rico, is MC José Massó, the unique and legendary WBUR's #1 radio personality and Afro-Caribbean Music connoisseur in Boston.

Lead Mural Artist: Roberto Chao, robertochao@aol.com

With support from an amazing team of other artists and volunteers.

The painting is done on 6'x4' PVC panels: 4 wooden frames sections of 8 panels each for a total of 32 panels, constituting a 128' long mural, plus the brick wall painted spaces making a total of 163 feet. Those 32' PVC panels are secured to the wall by strong wooden frames. For its preservation, the mural is covered with a durable anti-graffiti coat.

This project is supported by a Transformative Public Art grant from the City of Boston Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture.