



JACK O'NEIL



Jack O'Neil, owner of Blue Jackel Entertainment, is a jazz saxophonist who caught the world music bug one night long ago under the skies of Morocco. In 1995, he launched Blue Jackel with the release of **Brasil: A Century of Song...**



Nina Gomes O'Neil, who runs the company with her husband Jack, holds down the fort most of the time. But here she got to go to São Paulo for the première of Marlui Miranda's Indian Mass in 1997. Blue Jackel has released Marlui's Ihu Todos Os Sons and Ihu: Kewere: Prayer: Rezar CDs in the US.



BLUE JACKEL ENTERTAINMENT is well known for **Cuba - I am Time**, and **Brasil: A Century of Song**, two superb collections from two incredible countries, so rich in musical terms. We also know it for its recent releases of **Tony Martinez & Cuban Power**, **Maferefun** -Best Latin Album of the Year, 2000 AFIM Awards- and also for "My Roots & Beyond", William Cepeda & Afrorican Jazz.

Jack O'Neil shares with us his views about his label and his work:

1. There are 2 interesting facts about Blue Jackel: one, it's a family-run business, and two, you are a musician converted in producer and promoter, which gives I'm pretty sure, another perspective to your position as a businessman. What comments you have about that?

JACK: a) "First, Blue Jackel was not conceived as a family business, but as circumstances progressed it evolved into a family-run business. Now it has taken on a very extended use of this term."

b) "As musicians our perspective on the business is always colored with the music itself as the primary objective and the best vehicle to allow the artists voice to be heard. Then as a business comes the challenge to strive and maintain favorable consequences for both seemingly opposite philosophies: Art and industry."

When I was a working musician I learned how to produce in order to get music to sound the way I wanted it to. Now in working with musicians I can bring to the studio (or mixing room) another voice of experience to help bring out the best music possible. Also I understand what a musician goes through to tour and bring their music to the public."

2. "Brasil: A Century of Song" and "Cuba - I Am Time" are two amazing collections, pieces of history I would say. Can you comment on retrospective about these two projects?

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JACK: "When I produce a boxed set it is like taking a Doctorate or Graduate level course in a culture, with music as the main emphasis. I listen to thousands of recordings trying to find the right music that will work sequenced together. Both sets show where the music came from, and where it is today. The sets are designed with musicians in mind to learn the styles and rhythms."

3. Tell us about Blue Jackel now. What are your priorities, your plans for the future...

JACK: "Our priorities remain the same: To release music that has creativity, integrity, and a high level of professional quality. Music that can make you want to dig deeper to see where it is coming from, and how it matured to where it is today. Of course we also have to maintain a viable business in this challenging industry marketplace that pervades us now."

4. What happens to your life as musician?

JACK: "In the last few years- certainly playing a lot less due to the time it takes to keep the label running. Everything I hear and see helps me grow professionally as a musician. Knowledge of other styles of music helps me to adapt easily to musical circumstances, giving me more expressiveness, and therefore more incentive to try new things."

5. Can you give us your comments about the present status/development of Latin jazz music and/or musicians?

JACK: "Latin jazz is going through tremendous change and development today. The musicians continue to push the limits of technical proficiency and at the same time explore the roots of their individual cultures to truly bring out creative music based in tradition. Different forms and styles are being explored to free up the improviser yet not diminish the danceable/sociable aspects of Latin jazz."

Through 4 CDs, 65 tracks and a 48-page booklet with original interviews and historical accounts drawn from archives, **Brasil: A Century of Song** tells the story of Brazilian music as never before in song, text and photos.



Grammy-nominated **Cuba - I am Time**, is an expansive journey through the musical annals of Cuba: a 4 CD, 57 track compilation, which includes a comprehensive 112-page booklet and chronicles some of Cuba's most influential musical styles such as the son, guaguancó, rumba, trova, mambo, salsa and Latin Jazz by some of the country's foremost exponents and pioneers.

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