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Panamanian Pianist Danilo Pérez Closes Lawrence University 2011-12 Jazz Series

Posted on: May 7th, 2012 by Rick Peterson

Grammy Award-winning pianist and composer Danilo Pérez joins the Lawrence faculty jazz trio Friday, May 11 at 8 p.m. in the Lawrence Memorial Chapel for the final concert of the 2011-2012 Jazz Series.

The Panama-born Pérez began playing piano at age three as a student of his father, Danilo Sr., and later studied classical music at the National Conservatory in Panama. After moving to the United States, he completed a degree in jazz composition at Boston's renowned Berklee College of Music. While at Berklee, Pérez began performing with jazz heavyweights Jon Hendricks, Terence Blanchard, Claudio Roditi and Paquito D'Rivera. In the late 1980s, Pérez became the youngest member of Dizzy Gillespie's United Nations Orchestra. Today, in addition to his own trio, Pérez also performs as part of the Grammy Award-winning Wayne Shorter Quartet.



Danilo Pérez / Photo by Dragan Tasic

Pérez' discography includes 15 albums, including 1998's "Central Avenue" and 2010's "Providencia," both of which earned him Grammy Award nominations for best jazz album. He garnered two Grammy nominations for 2000's "Motherland," which was named that year's best jazz album by the Boston Music Awards. The *New York Times* praised his 1996 album "PanaMonk," a tribute to both Thelonious Monk and his Panamanian heritage, as "a masterpiece of jazz synthesis."

"Danilo's music has the capacity to connect your soul with the unique sonorities of the universe in perfect harmony. It is just beautiful," said José Encarnacion, instructor of jazz and improvisational music and jazz performance coordinator at Lawrence.

Encarnacion, a saxophonist, along with Dane Richeson, percussion and Mark Urness, bass will join Perez on stage as the Lawrence Faculty Trio.

Based in Boston, Pérez serves as artistic director of the Panama Jazz Festival, artistic advisor of the innovative Mellon Jazz Up Close series at Philadelphia's Kimmel Center and artistic director of the Berklee Global Jazz Institute.