

Shireen Francis "The Island Project"

Biography

Formed by jazz vocalist **Shireen Francis**, 'The Island Project' is a London based seven-piece Caribbean Jazz, Rhythm and Groove band.

Shireen Francis and her band combine Caribbean rhythms and contemporary jazz harmony in a uniquely sophisticated way, breathing new life into jazz standards as well as incorporating their own material. The combination of jazz laced with flavours of calypso and reggae, together with Shireen's exquisite vocals and innate musicianship is an uplifting musical experience bringing the spirit of carnival to international audiences.

Shireen's band contains some of the UK's top Jazz musicians:

Barry Green – Piano - **Chris 'Santo' Cobbson**– Guitar, **Neville Malcolm** – Bass, **Kenrick Roy Rowe** – Drums, **Lenny Lawrence** – Percussion, **Anisse Hadeed** – Steel Drums

Band members have worked with artists such as, Chet Baker, Courtney Pine, Chaka Khan, Branford Marsalis, Andy Hamilton, Beverley Knight, Marlana Shaw, Dennis Rollins, Omar and Billy Ocean, Mark Murphy, Jim Mullen, Cy Grant, Rudolf Walker and have performed at many International venues and festivals.

Shireen Francis studied jazz singing at Goldsmiths College. She is a warm and soulful performer playing prestigious venues such as, Royal Festival Hall, National Theatre, 100 Club, 606 Club. Festivals include Soho Jazz Festival, London Oris Jazz Festival, Ealing Jazz Festival, Richmond Jazz Festival, Ingolstadt Festival (Germany), Brattislava Jazz Festival (Czech Republic) and Slovenia Jazz Festival.

- *"A brilliant vocalist whose beguiling performance left me wanting more"* – Jazzwise Magazine

- *"Shireen has a deep soulful voice with incredible range and colour. Her understanding of groove & her impeccable phrasing frame the lyrical and often heart wrenching poignancy of her style"* - The Most

- *"Fabulous! A great mix of material ...Shireen and her fabulous band breathes new life into old favourites by treating them in a refreshing new way"* - Beverley Chadwick, Royal Festival Hall

'One of the highlights of the festival ...Shireen was scintillating and the band got everyone dancing in the aisles'. Dave Jones, Richmond Jazz Festival

Band members

Barry Green

Piano

Barry studied classical and jazz piano at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, graduating in 2002. Whilst still studying, he began playing professionally in a varied range of musical styles.

Barry plays regularly with both singers and instrumentalists in jazz venues all over the UK, including Ronnie Scotts, the 606 Club and The Vortex. Barry has also had a wide range of teaching experience at various Jazz Summer schools, and at The Guildhall School of Music and Goldsmiths College.

Chris 'Santo' Cobbson

Guitar / Musical Director

Born in Accra, Ghana, Chris studied guitar at London's Goldsmiths College and later at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. His versatility has led him to work with big bands, rock bands, afro-rock bands as well as on West End shows. Chris has recorded with Courtney Pine, Andy Hamilton and Sheila Ferguson. Chris performs and teaches both here and abroad, and has appeared at many prestigious venues and festivals.

Neville Malcolm

Bass

An extremely versatile performer, Neville is interested in and works with artists from many different styles of music, ranging from pop and hip-hop to Latin and jazz. He has performed and recorded on many projects - including Gabrielle's album Rise – worked with the singers Beverly Knight and Marlena Shaw, and toured Japan and Europe with the jazz/hiphop band US3.

Kenrick Roy Rowe

Drums

Drummer Kenrick Roy Rowe has been playing professionally for 25 years and he both performs and teaches a huge range of musical genres. Kenrick's career has taken him all over the world - including to Africa, America and the Caribbean - and outside of performing he also works at a London community-based music, dance and drama school for children.

Lenny Lawrence

Percussion

Len Lawrence has worked throughout the UK and Europe, playing percussion in many musical styles. Artists he has worked and recorded with include Dennis Rollins, Omar and Level 42 pianist Mike Lindup and his work in musical theatre includes percussion for the multi-award winning The Lion King.

Anisse Hadeed

Steel Drums

Trinidadian Annise 'Halfs' Hadeed is a soloist, composer, recording artist and freelance session musician and a leading figure in his field. During his 25-year career so far he has performed at venues such as Ronnie Scott's, the Lionel Hampton Jazz Club in Paris and the Berlin Jazz Festival, and recorded with stars such as Billy Ocean.