

Afro-Semitic Experience 300-word bio

The Afro-Semitic Experience is an American roots jazz band with a difference. They are a group of Jewish-American and African-American musicians who have been performing, recording, and teaching together for over 20 years. Their friendship ignites their passion and purpose: Together, as a band, they merge their musical roots, Jewish and Afro-diasporic melodies and grooves, combining the core concepts of *ase* and *shalom* - power, action, unity, and peace. Their music embodies the radical notion that people of different faiths, races, and beliefs can come together, and celebrate and build community. Their repertoire is a mix of original compositions and arrangements of pieces curated from Jewish and African-diasporic cultures. Their music reaches out to a distinct open-minded listening audience; their intentional merging of jazz with the spiritual and the sacred has allowed them to share our music in concert as well as at worship services in houses of worship across the United States.

The group began in 1998 as a duo with David Chevan on the bass and Warren Byrd on piano. Over the years they have added many other powerful and distinctive musical voices to our mix. The current line-up includes Will Bartlett on tenor saxophone, clarinet and flute Alvin Carter, Jr. on drum set, Saskia Laroo on trumpet, and Jocelyn Pleasant on percussion. They've recorded eight CDs and are in the midst of composing music for their ninth.

In addition to playing in traditionally sacred spaces, they perform at national and regional music festivals, on college campuses and the occasional jazz club.