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## The Life and Legacy of Willie Bobo Celebrated at William Grant Still Arts Center

A large, diverse, exuberant crowd assembled inside the William Grant Still Arts Center, Saturday, March 7, 2020. The threat of rain couldn't dampen their resolve to attend this important event.



Willie Bobo wall display (Ricky Richardson Photo)





By Ricky Richardson, Contributing Sports Writer

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William Grant Still Arts Center's 12th Annual African American Composer Series present Spanish Grease: The Life and Sounds of Willie Bobo. The exhibit is currently on display until June 13, 2020. The exhibit began with an Opening Reception, from 3:00PM-6:00PM. Special mention to Amitis Montevelli and her team for this wonderful exhibit and AISEBORN for his awesome artwork.

This is an original exhibition featuring never before release look into Willie Bobo's life, his family and friends such as Mongo Santamaria, Armando Peraza, Tito Puente, Herbie Hancock, Santana, Richard Pryor, Cal Tjader and many more. We were Blessed to be in the presence of Alicia Bobo (Willie Bobo's wife) and sons, Gil and Eric Bobo.

The exhibit offered visitors an intimate archival experience featuring family photos, documents, ephemera and discography of the work and life of Willie Bobo with the continuation of his legacy through his son, Eric Bobo.

Attendees enjoyed the exhibition as it lays out the influence and inspiration of Willie Bobo in Latin music as well as contemporary American music, with roots in African rhythms from Puerto Rico and New York, to later contributions in California.

The exhibition is in collaboration with an extensive free education program teaching music and the arts through the work of Willie Bobo.

DJ Ern Medina (Soul Assassins Radio) complimented, enhanced the Opening Reception with rotating tracks from Willie Bobo's catalog.

The Opening Reception featured a live concert of a very special set of Willie Bobo's music, with Marcus L. Miller with Project World Drum. This tight band consisted of Marcus L. Miller-trap drum set, Angel Figueroa-timbales, Derf Reklaw-vocals/flute/percussion, Eric Garcia-guitar, Bobby Pierce-keyboards, Carlitos Cuba-bass, David Gotler-trumpet, David Leach-percussion and Alan Lighter-percussion.

Their crowd pleasing set consisted of the tunes by Willie Bobo or tunes that he enjoyed. Their set consisted of "Trinidad," "Evil Ways," "Fried Neckbones and Some Home Fries," "Guajira," "Look of Love" featuring the vocal stylings of Derf Reklaw, "Spanish Grease," "Rise," and concluded their set with "Almost There." The band played with plenty of fuego, picante and soul.

Marcus L. Miller Project World Drum returned for another set after a short intermission. The group took it up a notch during the 2nd half of the program. They performed an explosive descarga of Afro-beat rhythms with guest percussionist Munyungo Jackson and Turntablist Rhetmatic (Beat Junkies) and Eric Bobo sitting in for a tune, to the delight of the crowd.

The free Education Program filled up very fast with a waitlist. Don't fret, Save the Dates! Upcoming event of note: Master Drum Class, March 28, 1:00pm-4:00PM (FREE, RSVP REQUIRED), Panel Discussion-Latin Music, then and Now, April 11, 2PM-4PM, (FREE, No RSVP Necessary). Finally, Taking it to the Streets: Do That Thing! Drums and DJ's for Bobo, April 26, 3PM-6PM (Bring your drums, or your Willie Bobo, or Bobo inspired records. Please note that this event will take place in Leimert Park in front of Sika and Harun, 4330-4336 Degnan Blvd.

William Grant Still Arts Center, (323)734-1165, Gallery Hours: Tuesday-Saturday, Noon-5:00PM. The Gallery is located at 2520 South West View Street, Los Angeles, California,



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