

The Anansi Trio is a group of like-minded musicians drawing from a wide range of musical influences. Using the language of Jazz as their starting point they also use elements of Afro-Cuban and Indian music as well as other global traditions. Using percussion, saxophones and acoustic bass they create a music that's unique and experimental yet remains accessible. With a diverse rhythmic approach and a focus on improvisation, The Anansi Trio hopes to put their own stamp on the American legacy known as Jazz.

Mark Merella is a musician whose versatility on drum set and hand percussion has made him an in-demand player for live, studio and educational settings. He has worked with a wide variety of artists in the Jazz and Latin fields including Randy Brecker, Steve Turre, Hilton Ruiz, Steve Berrios and Grammy winner Arturo O'Farrill. As part of Havana Select, he played for Celia Cruz's induction into the Smithsonian and 1997's Black Music Conference in Chicago. As a freelance musician Mark has played at many embassies, the White House, the Kennedy Center and also appears in the critically acclaimed film "Syriana". On the R&B circuit Mark has worked with The Flamingos, Bo Diddley, Phil Flowers and Mary Wilson of The Supremes. Mark was also commissioned by the American Composers Forum to compose a piece for Jane Franklin Dance which premiered March 1st, 2003. As part of Duende Quartet Mark participated in Jazz at Lincoln Center's "Rhythm Road" project and performed concerts and workshops worldwide. Mark is also an avid educator and teaches privately while continuing to work as a freelance musician in the Baltimore/Washington area.

Saxophonist/composer Matt Belzer has a diverse musical life. In addition to his numerous creative projects, he is a very active freelance musician, regularly performing on woodwinds at the Kennedy Center, the Library of Congress, and numerous theaters and concert halls in the region. As a result, he has performed with numerous artists including Smokey Robinson, Hugh Jackman, Chaka Khan, Martha Reeves and the Vandellas, Bernadette Peters, and Vanessa Hudgens. His compositions are published on Advance Music and UNC Jazz Press. He has been honored by Downbeat magazine, the Jazz Composers Alliance and the Maryland State Arts Council. He is the Director of Jazz Studies at UMBC where he directs the jazz ensemble, teaches the jazz courses, teaches saxophone, and collaborates with faculty and students.

Bassist Larry Melton performs in a wide range of musical settings. Adept at both acoustic and electric bass he is an in-demand player on the Baltimore/Washington music scene. Larry is a founding member of the jazz fusion group Permanent Vacation, a band that recorded two albums and gained notoriety among musicians. Also knowledgeable about Latin bass styles he has performed with the groups Sin Miedo and Mambo Combo. Larry has recorded with world renowned vocalist Eva Cassidy, including on her critically

acclaimed "Songbird" CD. Larry also works with Eva's brother Dan in the Dan Cassidy Swing Quartet and has performed with him in England.