



“...One of Detroit’s great party bands,” with a “sweeping field of vision that ranges from Swing Era classics to connoisseur works by Duke Ellington, mind-expanding pieces by the visionary Sun Ra and some down-and-dirty joint R&B.” — Brian McCollum of the Detroit Free Press

BIOGRAPHY

Detroit’s own down and dirty little big band, known nationally for curating some of the best in early jazz traditions and Black-American musical influences from the 20s, 30s and 40s, Planet D Nonet is more “hot” than “sweet,” according to PD9 cofounder and bandleader RJ Spangler, who started the nine piece ensemble with longtime musical partner James O’Donnell in 2007.

PD9, a pared down version of the traditional big bands of the 1930s, frequently features guest vocalists, adding to the versatility of the band’s show. The number of musicians in the lineup is reminiscent of the earliest big bands, when swing was still evolving into the sound that defined jazz music’s most popular era. “The band retains the agility of a small group,” says Spangler, “but with the harmonic palette of a larger one.”

The band’s repertoire is unmatched, in one set paying tribute to the music of Duke Ellington and Fletcher Henderson, and in another the proto-R&B sounds of Detroit artists such as Paul “Hucklebuck” Williams and King Porter. On some nights an audience might be treated to an entire evening devoted to the Afro-futuristic rhythms of Sun Ra—to whom the name Planet D Nonet is a deferential nod, if not a wink.

The group has been nominated and awarded multiple honors over the past decade, including several Detroit Music Awards 2011-2015. In 2016, PD9 was named DMA for Outstanding Traditional Jazz Artist/Group.

PD9’s latest release, A Salute to Strayhorn, features musical selections associated with the composer, lyricist, arranger and pianist Billy Strayhorn, best known for his celebrated musical collaborations with Duke Ellington.



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