

Karl Denson's Tiny Universe Bio

A highly energized funk machine, *Karl Denson's Tiny Universe* has been expanding listeners' minds and making them move to animated grooves since 1998. Led by former *Lenny Kravitz* sax-man Karl Denson, the Tiny Universe brings a dynamic sound that defies categorization. The band members, Denson on vocals, tenor sax, alto sax and flute, guitarist Brian Jordan, bassist Ron Johnson, keyboard player David Veith, trumpet player Chris Littlefield and drummer John Staten, have earned a reputation as kings of the unstoppable all-night show.

2002 saw the release of the accessible, deeply-grooving album *The Bridge*, so far the only recording by the current incarnation of the Tiny Universe. A multi-genre mix of music, the album earned immense critical praise. While some bands become trapped by the expectations of their fan base, *The Bridge* is evidence that *KDTU* refuses to be pinned down. The album's tracks range from the danceable R&B-flavor of originals "Because Of Her Beauty" and "The Answer," that hint at lessons learned from the funk school of *James Brown*, to the afrobeat and spoken word passages of the *Fela Kuti* tribute "Freedom" to the slightly psychedelic treatment of *Curtis Mayfield's* "Check Out Your Mind."

Denson has built a reputation as a groundbreaking musician equally potent as a masterful collaborator and an innovative solo artist, following in the footsteps of funkmasters *Maceo Parker* and *Fred Wesley*. From the beginning of his musical education, the California native filtered both the funk and soul of Motown and Stax with the deep searching of jazzmen like *Yusef Lateef*, *Rahsaan Roland Kirk* and, of course, *John Coltrane*.

Beginning in 1989, Denson spent four years recording and touring with Kravitz during the rock star's most liberated period of music-making, the *Let Love Rule* and *Mama Said* albums of the early 90s. During this same period, Denson and DJ Greyboy's "Unwind Your Mind" collaboration became the top dance track in Europe. "I remember touring with Lenny overseas and hearing that tune in every club we went to after the gigs," said Denson.

1992 brought the beginning of his solo career. Recruited by German jazz label Minor Music, Karl spent the next four years recording four acoustic jazz albums: *Blackened Red Snapper*, *Herbal Turkey Breast*, *Chunky Pecan Pie* and *Baby Food*. These recordings showcased Karl's prowess as a composer as well as jazz saxophonist. During this time he also became label-mate to former *James Brown* hornmen *Fred Wesley*, *Pee Wee Ellis* and *Maceo Parker*. From 1992-1994, during an extremely busy two year stint, Karl recorded and toured with his own quintet, as well as *Lenny Kravitz* and *Fred Wesley*. In 1994 Karl left the *Lenny Kravitz* band in order to devote full energy to his own vision. *The Greyboy Allstars* were created and quickly became synonymous with the term groove or acid jazz. Inspired by a love of jazz music and dance music the band defied the odds by becoming one of the largest drawing club acts in the country. The group could be characterized as a "true jazz band with a rhythm to keep you dancing". Denson's drive to continually innovate and push the musical envelope drove him to form the *Tiny Universe*, and the band is currently touring and writing material for their next release.