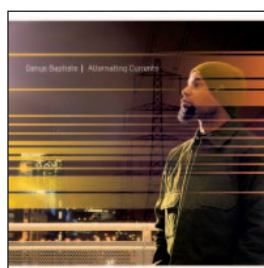




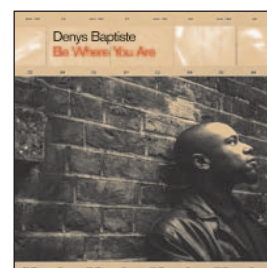
# Denys Baptiste



**Let Freedom Ring!**  
featuring Ben Okri  
DUNECD010



**Alternating Currents**  
featuring Juliet Roberts, Martin Taylor, Cleveland Watkiss  
DUNECD05



**Be Where You Are**  
featuring Juliet Roberts  
DUNECD03



Mercury Music Prize – An Album Of The Year 1999  
MOBO Awards – Best Jazz Act 1999  
British Jazz Awards – Rising Star 2000

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## About Denys Baptiste ...

Born in London of St Lucian parents on 14 September 1969, Denys took his first lessons in music at the age of 13. He was considered too small to hold a tenor sax so, to placate the aspiring saxophonist, he was given a clarinet instead. But he was never happy with the instrument; his inner urge was to play tenor sax and, at 14, he had grown the required number of inches to merit being awarded his first dream instrument.

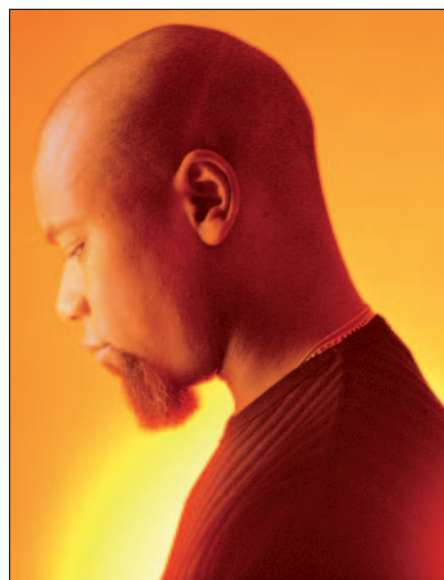
His introduction to jazz came from videos of Morrissey-Mullen shown by the music teacher at his school, and from listening to recordings by Charles Mingus and Count Basie. At a time when his contemporaries were decorating their schoolbook covers with pictures of the likes of Duran Duran and Depêche Mode, Denys was covering his with images of John Coltrane and Tubby Hayes. Another hero who made it to the front cover of his books was the man who inspired so many young Black British musicians, and who later became one of Denys' key influences and mentors: **Courtney Pine**.

In 1990, after completing an HND in Engineering, Denys went on to study music for two years at the West London Institute (Brunel University) and, in 1992, was accepted onto the jazz course at London's Guildhall School of Music.

Throughout his period of study, Denys participated in workshops led by saxophonist Tim Whitehead, often getting the chance to "sit in" with his band in late night sessions at the 606 Club, Chelsea. He also performed with pop and funk bands which led to appearances on BBC Television, including the popular chat show, **Wogan**.

But it was his performance at Watermans Arts Centre, Brentford in the second half of 1992 that started the ball rolling for Denys and opened the door into one of Britain's most prestigious jazz networks.

At this time, Watermans Arts Centre was hosting **Tomorrow's Warriors**, a series of open jam sessions for young jazz musicians organised by double bassist and original Jazz Warrior, Gary Crosby. Although Gary himself was not there to witness Denys' performance, the musicians were sufficiently impressed to take his details and pass them on.



Within a week, Denys received a call from Gary inviting him to come to his Jazz Café jam sessions in Camden the following weekend. Denys demonstrated such **remarkable technique, energy, swing** and **commitment** that, in a matter of weeks, he was taken on as the tenor saxophonist in **Gary Crosby's Nu Troop**.

Soon after, in 1993, Denys became a member of **The Jazz Warriors**, the seminal big band founded in the mid-1980s by Courtney Pine et al, and which has been responsible for producing some of the UK's leading lights in jazz.

1993 and 1994 were hugely successful years for Denys which took him on UK tours with **Bheki Mseleku** (with **Marvin "Smitty" Smith** and **Michael Bowie**) – supporting the Brecker Brothers, David Sanborn, Al Jarreau and Courtney Pine – and Gary Crosby's Nu Troop. He also got to play in bands led by **Julian Joseph, Jason Rebello, Omar**, and **Orphy Robinson**, to name but a few.

By 1994, Denys had taken some **giant steps**, gaining maximum respect from his musical peers. It is widely believed that when **Courtney Pine handed down one of his treasured Selmer Mk VI tenor saxophones to Denys** in September 1994, it was a clear sign of the respect he has, and his great expectations for this outstanding young player.

It is also evidence of his high calibre that, in January 1995, Denys was called to take his place on stage alongside **Courtney Pine** and **Steve Williamson** at a concert at the Jazz Café, London taking Denys to a new and higher level.

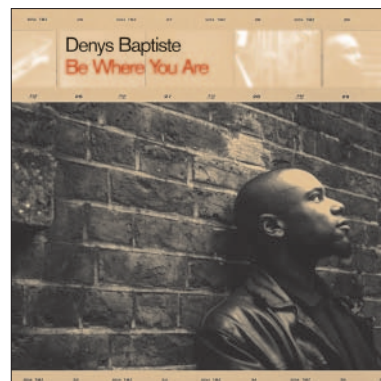
Since then, Denys has been called to record with artists as diverse as **Incognito, Jazz Jamaica, Ernest Ranglin, Gregory Isaacs, Juliet Roberts, Montage, J-Life, Gary Crosby's Nu Troop, The Jazz Warriors**, and on a British all-star Tribute To Bob Marley produced by Courtney Pine (**One Love – A Tribute To Bob Marley**, Mercury Music Entertainment/ Polygram 1996). He also had **two of his original compositions recorded – 741 and Incentricity** – on Gary Crosby's Nu Troop album, **Migrations** (Dune Records, 1997).

# Denys Baptiste

In July 1998, Gary Crosby's Nu Troop – of which Denys is a member – won the award for **Best Ensemble 1998** in the International Band Competition at the prestigious **Jazz à Vienne International Festival** in France. The band won FRF 30,000 (£2,900) and performed on the main stage to open the last night of the festival in front of an audience of 8,000+ in the spectacular open air Roman amphitheatre **Théâtre Antique**. This performance was recorded and broadcast on French radio and television. Denys also won **Best Soloist 1998 (3rd)** in this major international competition.

Denys rounded off 1998 with the recording of his début album, ***Be Where You Are*** (Dune Records DUNECD03, released April 1999). It is an incredible début recording, featuring seven of his original compositions and three superb arrangements of other composers' works. The album also features a track, ***Have A Talk With God*** (Stevie Wonder) performed by the glorious and hugely popular R&B vocalist, **Juliet Roberts** (courtesy of Delirious Records).

**Jazz on 3, BBC Radio 3's** Saturday night contemporary jazz programme selected Denys to represent the **Best of British jazz** at the **European Broadcasting Union (EBU) Jazz Festival** in May 1999 which, this year, formed part of the **Karlovi Vari International Jazz Festival** in Prague, Czech Republic. He performed two concerts with his quartet, broadcast worldwide by international broadcasting companies.



In July 1999, Denys travelled to **Canada with Jazz Jamaica at the Ottawa International Jazz Festival and Du Maurier Atlantic Jazz Festival, Halifax**, immediately followed by a **recording with Ernest Ranglin** for the great Jamaican guitarist's new album, ***Modern Answers To Old Problems***, for Palm Pictures (released on Telarc).

August saw Denys travelling south with the Damon Brown Quintet for an appearance in the Red Sea Jazz Festival, and in September 1999, just a week before his 30th birthday, Denys – along with 11 other top artists including **Blur, Manic Street Preachers, Chemical Brothers, and Talvin Singh** – was the recipient of one of the **UK music industry's most coveted awards for An Album Of The Year** in the **1999 Mercury Music Prize**, celebrating the **top 12 Albums Of The Year** across all musical genres. To receive such a tremendous accolade so early in his solo career was a significant achievement, especially with a début jazz album.

Just a few weeks later, at an **international star-studded ceremony** held at London's Royal Albert Hall, world champion boxer **Chris Eubank announced Denys Baptiste as winner of the prestigious 1999 MOBO Award for Best Jazz Act.**

1999 was rounded off with news that one of Britain's top soap operas, BBC TV's *Eastenders* was to play one of his original tracks from the album, *Be Where You Are* in a romantic teenage farewell scene! Proof indeed of the accessibility of Denys' music that it could be used for prime-time television.

In April 2000, yet another award was bestowed on this remarkable artist: **The British Jazz Award for Rising Star 2000.**

The year 2000 was a great year for Denys. Not only did he tie the matrimonial knot with his partner of 6 years, but also he had an eventful schedule which saw him touring internationally in **Russia, Netherlands, France, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Greece and the Caribbean**, both with his own band and as a special guest with other artists including the Jazz Jamaica All Stars and Martin Taylor. He also made his début, with the Denys Baptiste Quartet, at the prestigious **North Sea Jazz Festival** in The Hague, the **RomaEuropa Festival** in Rome, and the **Berlin Jazz Festival**, Germany.

In 2001, Denys toured extensively with a number of top artists including **McCoy Tyner UK All Stars, Manu Dibango Afro Funk Orchestra, Jazz Jamaica All Stars, Juliet Roberts, Martin Taylor**, and others. He also travelled far and wide with performances in **Europe, Zimbabwe and New Zealand.**

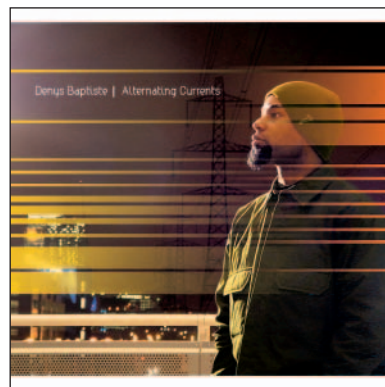
September 2001 saw the **release of his much-anticipated second album for Dune Records, *Alternating Currents*** (DUNECD05) this time working with a larger band featuring Martin Taylor and Juliet Roberts. As with his début, *Alternating Currents* received great critical acclaim and consolidated his position as one of the top saxophonists in Europe.

Denys undertook an extensive one-month UK tour with Martin Taylor in October 2001, followed in November with a special appearance with his own *Alternating Currents* band in the prestigious London Jazz Festival where he made his **début in the 3,000 capacity Royal Festival Hall, London double billed with the top young US saxophonist, Joshua Redman.** The show was broadcast live on BBC Radio 3 and BBC World Service, and webcast on the BBC Radio 3 website.

# Denys Baptiste

February 2002 was an important month for Denys as it marked the birth of his first child, coinciding with the start of a **major tour which took his 8-piece band all over the UK and to Hamburg, Germany**. Both events have proved life-changing but career-wise, the tour, combined with a **week-long residency at the renowned Ronnie Scott's Club, London** helped him to make further leaps as a bandleader and performing artist, and to considerably broaden public and media awareness of him.

His continued involvement with the hugely successful *skazz* (ska/jazz) big band, Jazz Jamaica All Stars has also served to broaden his appeal and, following his appearance with the band at the Banlieues Bleues Festival in Paris, he was booked to tour internationally as a featured guest in a quintet led by Paris-based US trombonist, **Sarah Morrow**.



Exciting news arrived in May 2002 with confirmation that Denys was to **host a number of BBC Radio 3's highly popular Jazz Lineup** shows which broadcast on Saturday afternoons. BBC Radio 3 Producer, Keith Loxam commented, "We're very excited to have Denys as a presenter for the show. We like his fresh new approach and are confident that he will **bring a new dimension to the programme**."

July 2002 saw Denys back in the studio, working again with Juliet Roberts but this time as a featured artist on her debut album for Dune, *Beneath The Surface* (DUNECD07). As well as performing, Denys worked on arrangements of some of the tracks previously co-written with Juliet. Over the next year, Denys worked on a new music commission and toured with Jazz Jamaica All Stars and top US pianist, **Andrew Hill**. Also in 2002, Denys appeared in the opening wedding scene of the Golden Globe-nominated movie, **Love Actually** (released November 2003) directed by Richard Curtis.

In September 2003, Denys released his third and most ambitious album to date: ***Let Freedom Ring!*** (Dune Records DUNECD010). Commissioned by the Cheltenham International Jazz Festival, ***Let Freedom Ring!*** commemorates the 40th anniversary of the historic 'I Have A Dream' oration by American black civil rights activist, Dr Martin Luther King.

Denys spent weeks transcribing the rhythmic patterns of this momentous oration and used the results as the foundation for the creation of a major new work.

Crafted in four inspirational movements – *I Have a Dream*, *With This Faith*, *Let Freedom Ring!*, and *Free At Last!* – the suite marks Denys' growing maturity as a composer and showcases his immense writing and arranging talents. His exhilarating mix of contemporary jazz, gospel, blues, and Afro-Cuban music features an explosive 11-piece international line-up including Abram Wilson (USA), Omar Puente (Cuba) and Gary Crosby (UK/Jamaica).

To complement the deep resonance of his music, Denys collaborated with Booker Prize-winning Nigerian author, Ben Okri fusing extracts from his epic poem *Mental Fight* to accentuate the simple yet profound ideas exemplified by Dr King.



***Let Freedom Ring!*** pays tribute to those who, in the face of adversity, have fought to overcome oppression and injustice, and encourages us to celebrate our cultural diversity on a global level. It is a joyously uplifting, celebratory, and totally accessible piece which is guaranteed to invoke the most positive vibes in all who hear it.

A further development to the piece was Denys' creative collaboration with acclaimed VJs, Yeast to produce inspired video projections mixing live video with civil rights-related documentary footage synchronised with the live performance by Denys' band. An EPK is available for viewing – please contact us for details.

***Let Freedom Ring!*** tours internationally with the (optional) synchronised multimedia set by Yeast. At every performance – including those at the North Sea Jazz Festival in The Hague, and leading jazz festivals in Cheltenham, London, Paris, Berlin, Sarajevo and elsewhere – Denys received rapturous standing ovations with members of the audience visibly overwhelmed by emotion and moved by the power

of the music and its message. Many acclaimed ***Let Freedom Ring!*** as "the best single piece of music EVER!" and "an absolute masterwork, jaw-droppingly good, brilliantly sourced, shocking, moving, really respectful of the subject matter."

Inspirational music/spoken word educational workshops for young people were also available with this tour and Denys undertook a series of workshops around the UK and was also commissioned by Festival Banlieues Bleues, Paris in 2004 to create a new piece – *Symphony Of Brotherhood* – for community groups in the disadvantaged suburbs of Paris comprising of a big band and choir. *Symphony Of Brotherhood* was performed by the groups in March 2004 as part of the festival in Paris.

# Denys Baptiste



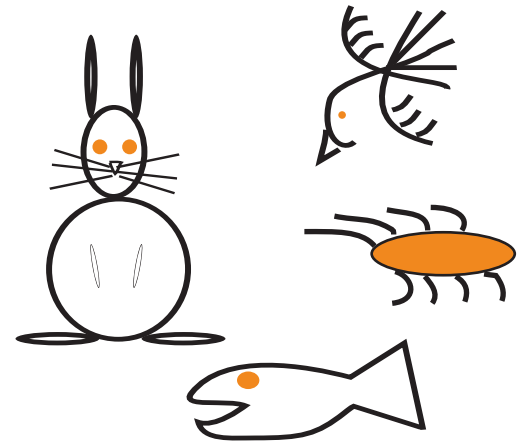
**Let Freedom Ring!** A totally uplifting, and inspirational show which deserves and needs to be seen and heard all over the world!

In 2004, **Let Freedom Ring!** was nominated for Best Album and Best New Work in the BBC Jazz Awards, and for Best Jazz Act in the MOBO (Music Of Black Origin) Awards. In 2005, **Let Freedom Ring!** was nominated for Best Album in the UK Parliamentary Jazz Awards.

Denys continues to tour his Tribute To John Coltrane which includes the performance of Coltrane's classic suite, **A Love Supreme**. Of his performance of this masterpiece at the Belgrade Jazz Festival in October 2005, one reviewer wrote: "For 50 minutes the audience joined Coltrane in heaven and witnessed a performance that will go down in Balkan jazz history. There was talk of nothing else in the bars of the theatre for hours and days after. Baptiste has left an indelible mark on all those who witnessed his performance and will be welcomed back with open arms."

In 2007, in celebration of the 200th Anniversary of the Abolition Of The Slave Trade Act 1807 in Britain, Denys brings **Let Freedom Ring!** back to the international touring circuit along with a new project, specially created for family audiences – **Anansi : Reunion**.

This new work follows the migration of the people of West Africa by tracking the folk tales of Anansi, the spider man. Throughout the period of the enslavement of African peoples, and beyond, these folk tales have migrated from their home in Ghana to the Caribbean, North America and Europe, making them one of the few abiding links that the displaced peoples of African origin share. As the Anansi character has migrated to different places, the animal that he represents has metamorphosed into a different species (the classic tales of Br'er Rabbit, for example). **Anansi : Reunion** will explore the migration of black slaves through a combination of narration, illustration and music from West Africa, The French Antilles, Europe, and the USA, and will tell the story of migration through a new, modern-day Anansi tale using characters that feature in the original tales, bringing them together through a 'family reunion'.



[www.dune-music.com](http://www.dune-music.com)  
[www.denysbaptiste.com](http://www.denysbaptiste.com)



Denys Baptiste is endorsed by, and plays,  
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# Denys Baptiste



## Celebrating Dr Martin Luther King: The Man And His Message

**Denys Baptiste**  
**Let Freedom Ring!**

DUNECD010

Release date: September 2003 (UK) / February 2005 (USA)



On 28th August 1963, symbolically placed in front of the Lincoln Memorial, Dr Martin Luther King delivered one of the most famous speeches of the 20th Century. Known throughout the world as the I Have a Dream speech, it cemented Dr King as one of history's greatest champions of civil rights. Over the last four decades the power of Dr King's oratory has inspired thousands towards social and cultural transformation, including Mercury/ MOBO award winning saxophonist Denys Baptiste in his most ambitious work to date.

Let Freedom Ring! – a new suite commissioned by, and premiered at the Cheltenham International Jazz Festival to celebrate the 40th anniversary of Dr King's speech – is Baptiste's third album for Dune Records. Citing freedom, equality and justice as the overlying themes, Baptiste uses the rhythmic patterns of I Have A Dream as the basis for his masterpiece, and combines contemporary jazz with rousing gospel, blues and Afro-Cuban music, and poetry.

He accomplishes the near impossible, linking dissident parts into one cohesive and emotionally absorbing piece of music. Unconsciously echoing what Dr King preached, Let Freedom Ring! is performed by an explosive 12-piece international line-up with roots in the Caribbean, Africa, India, USA and the UK including Omar Puente, Abram Wilson and Gary Crosby.

Crafted in four movements: I Have a Dream, With This Faith, Let Freedom Ring!, and Free At Last!, the suite marks a key stage in Baptiste's development as a composer, showcasing his immense writing and arranging talents. This is the first time that he has written for such a large ensemble, and the first time that he has incorporated spoken word with his music. On Let Freedom Ring! he collaborates with Booker Prize-winning author Ben Okri. Complementary to the deep resonance of Baptiste's music, Okri fuses extracts from his epic poem Mental Fight to accentuate the simple yet profound ideas exemplified by Dr King.

Forty years on, the I Have A Dream speech has lost none of its poignant power or sharp political relevance and Baptiste focuses on the speech in an act of tribute to the man himself as well as to the values and beliefs he stood for, exploring the way music can further convey these ideas. As Baptiste notes, 'Jazz music has always been connected very closely with the struggle for freedom, and there have been many important musicians and composers who have fought their own musical battles for these ideals through the mastery of their instruments and their ability to bring people together'.

The message that Baptiste shares with Dr King is that we must maintain our faith in a positive outcome, and so Let Freedom Ring! is a wonderfully joyous, celebratory, and totally accessible piece which is guaranteed to invoke the most positive vibes in all who hear it. This is a musical masterpiece that you'll just want to hear again and again!

Let Freedom Ring! is released on 29th September 2003 to coincide with a major UK tour sponsored by Dune Records, Arts Council England, PRS Foundation, Intro, and Jazzwise Magazine.

For selected live performances, VJs of acclaimed film-makers, Yeast project onto a large screen a mix of documentary footage, further placing Dr King's speech and Denys Baptiste's music in context. Yeast present a creative live mix of footage of the musicians' performance on stage, the text of Ben Okri's poem, and powerful images of the struggle for freedom, equality and justice by people of colour in America and South Africa, as well as footage of other 20th/21st Century struggles by oppressed people throughout the international community. An incredibly moving experience, the music and visuals act as powerful reminders of why the quest for freedom and civil rights must continue.

A series of workshops for young people, sponsored by Arts Council England and EDF Energy will run alongside a number of the tour dates.

**A profound yet totally accessible musical response to Dr King's timeless declaration.** Echoes

**Engrossing and intelligent music that also swings like hell.** Dr King would be proud TimeOut

**Incandescent. A big leap forward in Baptiste's short but already illustrious career.** The Guardian

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# What the critics are saying...

## *[Let Freedom Ring! DUNECD010]*

[Baptiste] is becoming an imposing figure. It's time to give him a look. An ambitious piece of work [and] a good way to come upon an entire circle of players from a scene American jazz enthusiasts don't know as well as they should.

**New York Times**

Packs the emotional power and artistic loftiness of Wynton Marsalis' Pulitzer Prize-winning *Blood On The Fields*, but is not nearly as laborious.

**Downbeat**

★★★★ A powerful album. Baptiste secures his place in a distinguished line of African and African-Caribbean musicians crucial to the evolution of British jazz since the 1950s. [His] music has a strong magnetic quality that draws the listener closer to its message with each listening. **Downbeat**

Baptiste has crafted a hands-down winner. A powerful artist within a performing role, on this release he surfaces as a visionary. Exuberantly recommended. **JazzReview.com**

Baptiste is becoming an important force on the UK jazz scene. **JazzTimes**

A profound yet totally accessible musical response to Dr King's timeless declaration. **Echoes**

Engrossing and intelligent music that also swings like hell. Dr King would be proud. **TimeOut**

★★★★ CD Of The Week: Incandescent. A big leap forward in Baptiste's short but already illustrious career. (Also: Gig Of The Year 2003) **The Guardian**

★★★★ Album Of The Year. Denys Baptiste is where British Jazz is now and it's a wonderful place. **Jazzwise**

One of the most promising and intelligent young players on the British jazz scene. *Let Freedom Ring!* takes things to a new level and is a concept album of depth and complexity. **Music Week**

[On *Let Freedom Ring!*] Denys Baptiste joins the likes of the very different Johns, Cage and Coltrane. **Straight No Chaser**

A mind blowing album. **JazzReview.com**

A major British Jazz talent. **Jazzviews**

A bold and exciting album...for those who like a bit of politics with their music, *Let Freedom Ring!* is essential. **Socialist Review**

## *[Alternating Currents DUNECD05]*

★★★★ CD Of The Week: Baptiste faced a dilemma unfamiliar to most British jazz players – how to follow up his success. With *Alternating Currents*, the follow-up problem has been resoundingly resolved. **The Guardian**

★★★★ CD Of The Week: More than just a very good saxophonist. He has the ability to make quite complicated music attractive and simple music interesting. **The Observer**

## *[Be Where You Are DUNECD03]*

Denys Baptiste is taking Europe by storm and becoming the icon of British jazz.

**Time Magazine**

★★★★ CD Pick Of The Month: Quite magnificent. **BBC Music Magazine**

CD Choice: Mature, melodic originals that lodge in the memory at first hearing. A terrific saxophonist. **London Evening Standard**

Marks the emergence of a new generation in British jazz. **Mercury Music Prize**

A significant composer. **The Times**

Spellbinding. See this saxophonist colossus now. **The Weekly Journal**

# Denys Baptiste