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# Chillie Willie Groove

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## **Chillie Willie Groove – Latin percussion based ensemble**

William Portela, “Chillie Willie Groove”, was born into a musically inclined family. His father was a well-known Latin percussionist in the New York salsa scene, and whose Mother was a singer. In fact, while Chillie was in his mother’s womb, his father would play Latin rhythms to mother’s womb while baby Chillie kicked and moved her stomach with excitement!

In first grade, and throughout high school, music was dominant in Chillie’s life. He then was later selected to go to a unique music high school, Education Center for the Arts. Chillie went to Shenandoah Conservatory of Music, and played marching drums with the United States Army Band. Chillie has played with countless salsa bands, smooth jazz bands, funk bands, soul rhythm and blues bands, and now gospel bands. He has also toured Germany, France, and Luxembourg.

Chillie Willie Groove auditioned to open up for Lionel Hampton and Duke Ellington Bands, in which he was granted the exclusive privilege of being chosen among 63 other bands for the sole opening act! Chillie Willie Groove toured all over in the 1980’s with: Angela Bofill, Phyllis Hyman, Tom Browne, and also opened up for Spyro Gyra, Chuck Mangion, Tower of Power, El Gran Combo, Marion Meadows, and Poncho Sanchez, Grupo Fantasma, Bootsy Collins, and Jimmy Cliff. Major highlights in Chillie’s music career came when he met and played right beside Tito Puente at the Brian Alden Jazz Festival in Connecticut. On May 27<sup>th</sup> 2017, he performed a special tribute to Tito Puente at Hermosa Beach; using a 33 piece orchestra as a tribute to his mentor "Tito Puente", beating out 27 seasoned worldly percussionist for that #1 Spot!

## **James Jinning**

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