



Our first member of Women in Jazz South Florida, Inc. from the African continent is Eunice Quipuco Piedade José a/k/a Afrikanitha born in Angola in 1974. The day I met Afri, I felt the Earth move. Her vibrancy was intoxicating. When she walked through my door, the 10 other members there to greet her also felt Afri's warm and loving countenance. But, it was when we heard her singing voice that the energy began to shift in the room!

Since our meeting, in April 2011, Afrikanitha has become my youngest child. I am her American Mom. She never disappoints. Her song *Differences* on our second compilation CD of 10 fabulous female composers shines like gold! Rhythmic and moving, the song exemplifies Afri's soul-stirring mannerisms. Then, she gifted us with a second song *Smile* for our fourth compilation CD, released on January 2, 2014, which actually made me cry, when I first heard it!

Afrikanitha is so mellow that you would never know she was a dynamic performer. When she opens her mouth to sing, it is quite a surprise! What astonished me even more than her music is her glossy magazine *Kanitha*, published to keep Jazz alive in Angola. When she featured me in an article written in Portuguese, I got chills, just knowing that someone in a foreign country would know about our organization and the issues facing women musicians.

After watching her YouTube videos, over and over, I realized that Afrikanitha is a soldier on the forefront of global society. She works for Jazz, women, children, and men in all walks of life. Her passion is to represent Africa in a highly positive light. The proof of that is in her dedication to being the best musician that she can be. It is no wonder that she is pursuing her education at Florida Memorial University, where I know she puts in many hours to learn all she can about music theory and Jazz studies.

Many may not know that Afri is a dedicated wife and mother to a genius husband and three gorgeous children, who are delightful to be around. Although I have two children, five grands, and two great grandsons, I feel like Afri and her family are mine, too. I am so proud that she chose me to be her American Mom!

~ Diva Joan Cartwright

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