



## Up and Coming: Dana Leong

By Jim Welte

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**Child prodigy-turned-master craftsman, NYC-based trombonist keeps jazz fresh and danceable.**

Fusing jazz and hip-hop in the 00s can be a risky venture.

Most of its progenitors have long since moved on to greener sonic pastures, and those that are still doing so (ahem, Guru's *Jazzmatazz*) are doing so more out of need than want.

But Dana Leong is here to rescue you from your jaded cynicism about the US3s and Groove Collectives of the world. Jazz can still be funky and danceable, and hip-hop can most certainly still be artistic and built around--dare we say it--song structure.



Leong is a former child prodigy who is a virtuoso on both the trombone and cello. He's done session work with an amazingly diverse cast of artists, including Ray Charles, Wynton Marsalis, Kanye West, Norah Jones, Earth Wind & Fire, Barry White, Erykah Badu, Talib Kweli, Lauryn Hill, Alanis Morissette, Zap Mama, and Yoko Ono.

As a composer and producer, Leong has taken that diversity to heart and come up with a sound that is grounded in jazz but unafraid to mix in all sorts of styles.

His sophomore album, *Anthems of Life*, hits stores this month, and Leong and his band were recently chosen to participate in The Rhythm Road: American Music Abroad, a program co-operated by the U.S. State Department that essentially makes Leong a cultural ambassador on a world tour this winter.

If the federal government's stamp approval doesn't cut it for you, take ours: Dana Leong is one to watch.

Visit [www.mp3.com](http://www.mp3.com) for an exclusive video interview with Dana Leong.