SANTES Episode 00 Trailer: Welcome to SANTES!

[match strikes][solemn acoustic guitar] ♪♪

[long exhalation]

STORMMIGUEL (SMF): Hello, everyone. Welcome to episode one of Santes, a podcast for future ancestors. I'm StormMiguel Florez.

LUNA: And I'm Luna Merbruja, and we are thrilled to welcome KB Boyce as our very first Santes guest.

SMF: Yes! Yes yes yes!

LUNA: Woo hoooo!

SMF: KB Boyce is the co-founder and co-director of Queer Rebel Productions. When he's not mentoring QTPOC artists, KB creates sci-fi soul inspired soundscapes and experimental media as XD LEGIT. KB's latest creative project is the Infinite Anachronist.

LUNA: In this episode, we talk with KB about their past and current projects, including his first punk band at age 15. We also talk about the team of ancestors who have been guiding and protecting KB, and how this beautiful elder continues to pay it forward.

SMF: Both Luna and I have been following KB for years and are thrilled for them to join us today. Welcome, KB.

LUNA: And welcome all of you to Santes!

SMF: Hello, everyone, and welcome to the Santes podcast. We are so excited to have KB here today. Hey, KB Boyce!

KB: Hey. Hey! It's so good to be here. So good to be here.

SMF: So, KB, welcome. You are our first guest on Santes. So, like, you're kind of our experimental podcast guest and also someone who I just adore and have for so long admired. So just thrilled to have you.

KB: Thank you so much. And that's perfect that I'm your experiment because I am an experimental kind of guy, you know? I mean, yeah, I'm a musician, but I do all types of music. And the latest thing I put out is experimental kind of... meditative, for QTPOC folks to kind of take themselves somewhere else-- type of vibe. So, experiments, I'm all about it. Happy to be here.

LUNA: I love that. I've been listening to a lot of vibrational music recently, and it is so good. Like, I get the best sleep when I hit those right vibrations, the self-love ones, the calming ones. Yeah, so excited to check that out.

SMF: Yeah, you're gonna love this, Luna. I was listening to some of it earlier, and I was like, I'm gonna trance out so hard to this. And maybe leave my body and travel.
["Warmth" track from The Infinite Anachronist]

♪ [meditative hum] ♪

[cosmic low chimes]

[chimes and dreamy hum]♪♪

KB: Yeah. Yeah. I feel like in the creating of that piece of music, of that series of pieces, that it helped me a lot, you know. You know, as you're engineering a piece of music, you have to listen to it over and over and over and over and over again. But once I got through it, I felt so much better and I felt like, yeah, I really want to share this with community and maybe it'll inspire other artists to just kind of get in a different headspace and, you know, kind of not think about the craziness that we're living through. Such a time to be alive right now.

LUNA: Mm hmm.

KB: You know, as an elder, I'm 62, as an elder, I've seen a lot of change, but I really feel for our young folks in our community coming up into this. I mean, we didn't have community the way that the kids, trans kids these days have.

LUNA: Mm hmm.

KB: But... we also-- this is just a-- we live in the future now, and it's a whole different set of issues to—

SMF: Yes.

KB: Overcome. To navigate. So I'm really aware of that. I'm really aware of that.

SMF: Yeah. And I wanna get into that thinking about ancestors. First, I wanna say The Infinite Anachronist. Check it out on-- This is KB's latest music project, yeah?

KB: Yes. It's the latest for now. I'm about to release another EP, but that's gonna be slightly different. That is going to be my singer songwriter side.

SMF: Alright!

KB: So, Infinite Anachronist is my kind of meditative... it's sound scaping that kind of floats between sci-fi horror movie soundtrack and meditating. So it's edgy-ish at times. So just be aware of that. It's not all, you know.
[ominous guitar]

SMF: Yeah, I was catching that. That's why I was like, that's just gonna pop me right out of my body.

[laughter]

because I like things that kind of-- that edgy, like, you can't quite fall asleep because something kind of spikes a little bit or gets a little weird. I enjoy trancing out to that. Well okay. So we're gonna be inviting ancestors with us today if we so choose.

And so, KB, is there someone that you would like to invite to just be in the space with us? You can say a little bit about who they are if you'd like.

KB: Sure. I have what I consider my team of ancestors who are around me at all times. So they're really--I can't just give a name. I really feel surrounded by support in that realm. And so I just wanna-- and I'm getting goosebumps as I say this, you know, I just Wann welcome all of my team who areaways with me and always supporting me, who co-create this music that I put outwit me that I couldn't do it without the support of my ancestral team, my spirit team. I mean, they're a bunch of very intimidating...folk, and they've got my back. And that's, I really feel like the whole reason I'm still hereat 62 doing what I do, is because of my backup, my support. They've always been--I grew up in New Yorkin the 70sand I'm still alive. So... [chuckles]And I can tell you I've had quite a few near death experiences in my life. And I-- the fact that I'm still here tells me that I got some serious backup.

LUNA: Mm hmm.

KB: No joke. No joke.

SMF: Yay. Welcome. Welcome to the team of intimidating and protective ancestors of KB.

[soft laughter]

LUNA: I love that. It's-- I love that you feel them around you. I feel that a lot of us are protected, especially a lot of us who have been openly queer and trans, working in the movement, doing different types of activism and art to be publicly out and do the work that we do, absolutely there's so much protection in the spirit realm that's necessary too.

KB: Absolutely.

LUNA: So thank you for calling that in because I hope that everyone else can feel theirs as well. Like if you are queer or trans, you have an ancestor who's out there protecting you, just so you know. In case you weren't aware—

KB: Probably more than one.

LUNA: Exactly.

KB: Probably more than one.

LUNA: Yeah I've been thinking--we've been talking a lot about ancestors lately, so when I think about ancestors, one of the things I think about is our roles and our connection to them. So, when I came up with ancestor work, was very one directional of like you give offerings, you give blessings, you give prayers, but not to ask anything of them or you know, not to be open to the gifts and the blessings that they're also there to give as well. And I think in the past few years, I've been starting to ask a little bit more like, 'Hey, this job is really hard. Can you help me out with some of these issues going on? ‘Or like, I'm having some really deep, conflicts with people I love, my partners, my close friends, like I really need some guidance, and taken to tarot cards or lighting a candle. But recently this year I’ve been getting a lot of natural gifts from my ancestors. I’ve been getting a lot of crow feathers in the past few weeks. I’ve just been seeing them all over the floor.

KB: Yeah. Yeah.

LUNA: And I'm curious when you feel really connected to your ancestors, what types of messages do they send you? Do they send you gifts? Do they give you natural gifts? Does it come through tarot cards? I’m just curious how that line of communication is for you.

KB: Wow. It's so...hard to put into words. I really feel this connection that has...for me, its roots are in music. So I get messages through music as I'm listening to songs, or I could just be out and about and hear something, and a lyric will just make sense for me at that moment. And that kind of thing started for me when I was just a little kid. You know? I gotta tell you, when I was14, 15, I wound up in a band.

[chuckles]

My parents were both musicians, so I'm very blessed and lucky in that way. So they were pretty supportive of me exploring music. I don't think they expected me to fall into punk rock in 1978--

[Luna laughs]

KB: but I did. And I wound up in a band that got-- we wound up getting signed and putting a record out and all of that stuff. It was like...I was just getting the sounds of the music that I needed to write for this just coming to me. And I didn't know where it was coming from. I didn't know punk rock from a hole in the wall, you know, it was just becoming a thing. And I just happened to-- or I was guided into that situation. And so my childhood was kind of crazy, but I feel like I've had this support. My dad, first of all, died when I was 14.And immediately, I felt like Pops was just right there. He never left me, you know? I felt closer to him than I had when he was around. And he was a bandleader for his life. You know, he played piano. He ran a bebop, big swing band. And I just feel like he's always right there. Kinda...(gruff voice) 'Hey, here's where you need to go with this. Try this. 'And the older I got, I just never let that connection fall. I've just always felt it. It's-- I've got goose--I got chills right now. But I've always felt it. I've always tried to tune into it because it was so obvious to me. Like, I said, just listening to songs in passing and it would just speak to me and I'd be like, oh my god, thank you, that makes sense. So as crazy as it may seem, I've lived my life following what my backup has pushed me towards. I never go, "oh, that's too crazy, I'm not gonna do that. "I always go, "well, okay!"[laughter] You know? And part of that freedom was getting into punk rock at that time. As a young Black trans kid who didn't have the words, I didn't have the words to explain what I was. I tried to tell my family, "I'm a boy, "and they laughed at me. You know, what are you going to do? I was like, well, if they're not gonna hear me, that's on them. I gotta do me. And punk rock helped me to have that attitude. Like, 'well, fuck you then. 'You know?

SMF: Yeah. What was the name of your band?

KB: Nastyfacts, N-A-S-T-Y-F-A-C-T-S. One word.

SMF: Nastyfacts! I love that.

KB: I was the lead singer. I was a lead singer, bassist, and I wrote the songs that got us signed and that wound up being on the EP that we put out, WHICH...hold on. This is funny, I actually...

SMF: KB's showing us something. What are we seeing? What are we gonna see?

KB: Yeah. You're gonna see...[rustling] Can you see it?

LUNA (gasping): Oh my god!
♪ [engine revs] ♪
♪ [punk guitar riff] ♪
♪ YEEOOOWWW ♪
♪ [guitar riff, engine revving] ♪
BABY PUNK KB:
♪ I'm not as strong as I look ♪
♪ I'm not as stoned as I seem ♪

SMF: Can you describe what you're showing to us?

KB: This is a 12 inch copy of the Nastyfacts EP that was just re-released a couple of years ago. And so the folks who re-released it sent me a copy and sent me t-shirts and had me do podcast interviews talking about my first band. I feel so blessed in my life right now that it's hard to put into words. I never thought I would even be around at 60-whatever.When we were in Nastyfacts, we thought 18 was old. We thought 30 was like, oh my god. One foot in the grave, one foot on a banana peel.

[laughter]

[music resumes]
♪ Drive my car ♪
♪ Drive my car ♪
♪ Drive my car ♪
♪ Drive my car ♪

KB: You know, I didn't think I'd last this long. And what I find is that the longer you stick it out and you just stand ten toes down and be yourself, the easier it becomes. It's not easy. It's not easy at all, but it's worth it to try and just be yourself. The most important thing for me was not to lose myself, you know? And like I said, being in Nastyfacts, I found, for the first time in my life, actual joy, the feeling of joy. And I never wanted to lose that. I always wanted to find a way to have joy in my life once a day, at least, if I could. And I'm not joking. I've always tried to keep that mentality.

- Mm hmm.

KB: Super important. And I'm still here.

SMF: Yes.

LUNA: Mm hmm.

SMF: Thank you for being here. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you for finding that joy and reason to be here. You know, I think about when you talk about your ancestors and you're kinda just listening and then acting, I think about-- so you run Queer Rebels, which is an amazing production that brings together BIPOC artists of so many different mediums. It started out as Queer Rebels of the Harlem Renaissance, which I am so interested inhering how that came about and what part the ancestors played in that, and what conversations were you having with the ancestors to even create that first iteration?

KB: Well, the ancestors had brought me together with an amazing woman. Her name is Celeste Chan, my ex-wife. And Celeste and I, together, would sit up all night just talking about art and creating and things to do and we found out that the Queer Cultural Center in San Francisco was giving out grants for the National Queer Arts Fest, for, you know, they were looking for ideas for things to produce during the Queer Arts Fest. And Celeste and I brainstormed and brainstormed, and I'm pretty sure the ancestors were like, "Well, ya know the Harlem Renaissance was a thing

[knowing laughter]

that they've been trying to sweep under the rug fa-evah, evah-- all the queerness of it." And we were like, ‘Well, you know, that’s a really--that's fascinating. Let’s pull together a group of artists, Black artists, and ask them to create works, new work based on the queer energy of the Harlem Renaissance. ‘And so we did that. We reached out to a handful of artists, and among those artists was one, Kirya Traber, who is amazing. And she created a piece about Gladys Bentley, who was a crossdressing blues performer back in the days of the Harlem Renaissance. She created a piece, a one-person piece, around Gladys Bentley's life, being a crossdresser back in the thirties? I guess? And that piece has become a one-person show off Broadway. Kirya moved to New York and has continued and built from that one little nugget, an entire--an entire show that she’s produced. And she's just on fire anyway. Look her up, K-i-r-y-a Traber, T-r-a-b-e-r.

SMF: I know Kirya. Yeah. Just amazing.

KB: Amazing. Super, super talented. Anyway, a lot of beautiful things like that came out of Celeste and I coming up with this idea. We thought it would be a one-off event, Queer Rebels of the Harlem Renaissance. It sold out. They asked us to do it a second night, and we did. Then the next year, they asked us to do it again, and we did for two nights. And then Celeste and I were like, well--you know, Celeste is of Asian descent. I am African American. I felt like I would like to be able to expand. I think Queer Rebels should expand to be QT BIPOC, not just African American artists. I mean, we need the support. African American artists need the support, but we all do as well. And not just established artists, but folks who are just trying to put their foot in the pool of being an artist, of considering-- of seeing themselves as an artist. And so we decided to make Queer Rebels an actual production company. So all queer and trans artists of color of all ages. We are an intergenerational arts organization. And so we took it from there, and that was 16 years ago.

SMF: Has it been that long?

LUNA: Yeah. [crosstalk]

KB: It sure has. How crazy is that?

LUNA: 'Cause I remember going to Queer Rebels shows in 2011, 12, 13when I was in the Bay, and it was just incredible. It was the first time that I saw QT BIPOC on stage in their art, their element, their craft, and new artists too. Like it's where people fell in love with being artists, right? And I think that they wouldn't have had those opportunities had someone like you and Celeste had not created that space for them to do so--

KB: Thank you.

LUNA: Deeply honorable work and just I love that it came from ancestors, I love that you and Celeste saw it through. And I love that it's still going. That energy, that art, you know, never ends.

KB: Even when my relationship with Celeste ended, when we went our separate ways, we decided-- well, we realized that Queer Rebels was bigger than both of us and that it needed to continue. So even though we were going through divorce, literal divorce, we were married, we spent a year still working together to keep Queer Rebels together. Celeste is an amazing woman. She stuck it out until I could get another team to make it continue. So I just want to give all props to Celeste.

SMF: Props to Celeste.

KB: She's badass.

LUNA: Absolutely.

SMF (satisfied grunt):Okay, so...I'm hearing how you're living your life. And I know you're mentoring a lot of young artists. And when I say 'young artists, 'I don't necessarily mean artists who are young in age, but maybe young in their art. Right?

KB: Absolutely.

SMF: So-- I think I kinda know the answer to this question, but I wanna hear it in your own words and I want you to expand beyond anything you could possibly dream of. What kind of ancestor do you want to be when the time comes?

KB: Yeah. I'm--I'm lucky, at one in the morning when I was about to go to bed, I was like, let me check my email and just see what's going on. And so I saw that you had prompted that in the email, and so I had a moment to think about it, thankfully,' cause that's a deep question, I gotta tell ya. But, I can say that I would like to leave--that I would like to be seen as that ancestor who believes in the support that we have around us and believes in how strong that support can make us, we can-- we're able to pull through and push through so much more than we realize. And I would like to be living proof while I'm here, I am living proof that you can move forward. I was born in the projects in Fort Greene, and how my life has unfolded is mind boggling to me. Like...like I said, I really shouldn't even be here. I have so many times I could just...Deuces! I'm out, you know? But...there's always been--again, I have chills, has always been the support around me saying, "No, no, no, you're here for a reason. There's some stuff we need you to do. So you can't--" you know, I was in a car accident where I got--it was a hit and run on the 405 in LA. My Jeep flipped over, threw me out onto the 405.I was unconscious. And I didn't get run over by any cars. I woke up in the hospital two days later.

LUNA: Wow.

KB: Two days later. And I realized, yeah, I'm supposed to be here 'cause that's insane.

LUNA: Mm hmm.

KB: And I'm sitting here talking to you. Can you see--I mean, you should have seen me. I burst every blood vessel in both of my eyes. I had a fractured nose, broken rib. I mean, I was a wreck. When I woke up in the hospital and saw myself in the mirror, I was like, okay, I'm definitely supposed to be here. And there's a reason. And I want to be the ancestor that's, you know, that patron saint of just keep going. Just keep doing what you gotta do. Don't stop. Don't let nothing stop you. Don't let anybody tell you who you are. You know who you are better than anybody else. And you gotta just do what you gotta do. You're here for a reason. You are here for a reason. Future folks need you. You know, that's what I would like folks to...you know, to know that we're so much-- we're so strong. We are so strong. And just like Queer Rebels reminds me all the time, we're super talented. I'm talking about weas in our community, super, super talented, super, super strong. And that's why so much stuff comes at us. They just want to try and mess

us up, make you feel down, like you can't do shit. Nah. Fuck that. You can do whatever the hell you wanna do. You know? But it's hard. It takes work and it's worth it. Super worth it. You know?
LUNA: I love that you named that, that you are the source of strength and affirmation for these folks who may be struggling with some of that energy of like, ‘Can I step into my art? Can I step into my power? ‘And you're gonna be there on the other side saying yes.

LUNA: Yes you can.

KB: Yes you can. Hell yeah. 'Cause that’s how it was for me. I felt it like, [crosstalk]'You got this. Go. Go. Go.’ It didn't matter how crazy it was at the time. I just was like, "Okay. I’m gonna go. Let me go. Let's go.’ And I'm still like that. I’m still like that. That’s where the Infinite Anachronist came from. I’m like, 'this is crazy, but I'ma do it! Let's go!'

♪ [fast paced punk guitar and drums] ♪
♪ I see your name, I hear it’s all over town ♪
♪ I see those other girls puttin' you down ♪
♪ I've made an oath you better run for cover ♪
♪ 'Cause I'ma get you 'fore the day is over ♪
♪ I want to hear you loud and clear... ♪

LUNA: I have a practice of creating an altar in my home for my loved ones and, for artists that I admire, too. Like, if I'm sitting with their work, I'll create--print a photo of them and give some items. What do you imagine would be on your altar if someone were to give offerings to you? What were some things that you’d love, that you'd cherish, that you'd appreciate from the other side? Well, I'm not big on material things, so it's hard to say. I would say...offer me tobacco and water, and I'd be happy. I’m not even kid--oh, how about some coffee?[crosstalk and laughter]Black-- dark roast coffee.

SMF: I was gonna say, what's gonna get your attention? What's the smell that is gonna—
KB: Coffee and tobacco.
[laughter]

Dark coffee and tobacco, and I'm a happy man.

[laughter]

It don't take much. You know?
LUNA: I love that. Low barrier.

KB: Yeah. Yeah. You know?

SMF: I'm gonna add Drum tobacco to my list now. Like, I miss-- we were talking about this earlier. I miss Drum tobacco--just being able to smoke it. But as an ancestor, I feel like I could just, you know, just enjoy it, so thank you for that.

KB: Do whatever you want.

[laughter]

KB: That's right. That's right. Right on.

SMF: Okay, so we've asked some kind of serious questions. But okay, let's say--So like, I used to like to have these potlucks for the dead on Dia de los Muertos or Dia de Muertos, and everybody would show up with a dish that reminded them of somebody who they loved, someone who, like maybe made that dish or really enjoyed that dish. And then we would make a big plate for the ancestors and talk about what the dish was and who it was-- and what it reminded--why it reminded us of them, etcetera, maybe a little something about the person. So let's say we're having a potluck. There's a couple questions here. We're having a potluck for the ancestors. So first one, there's two phases to this. We're having a potluck. We're having we're all here alive, future ancestors. We're having that potluck. What are you bringing? And this time, I'm gonna ask you to pick one person, this could be someone that you knew, if you like. What are you bringing? What dish are you bringing? And tell us about the dish and the person.

KB: Well, does it have to be a dish? Because I wanna bring my guitar and sing.

SMF: There it is.

KB: You know? That would be my thing. I would sing for my mom. Lost my mom just a few years ago during COVID. But she made it to 97.And, anyways...I would love to just sing songs, and it wouldn't just be for mom, it would be for all of my team because I feel like I have a squad who love music. They send me the greatest ideas, and I try to act on them. I try to go, “Think about it, then do it. Think about it, then do it." And I feel like that’s gotten me to where I am now. So if that is a possibility to switch out, bringing a dish of food or bringing a selection of songs that remind me or that they loved or that type of thing, that’s what I would do.

SMF: I love that. We need that. Music is nourishing. Music feeds us. So thank you for bringing that.

LUNA: Yeah. I once ran an ancestor workshop. It was related on a topic of us being future ancestors, and I had everyone drop a song that was meaningful to them that they would want someone to play to invoke them. And there's this whole playlist now of all these beautiful songs and they're so different from each other, but

KB: I'll bet.

LUNA: Yeah, it's incredible--when I listen to it sometimes it’s like this is what our community is, you know, that we all want our own specific song and food and offerings, and I just think it's a beautiful thing to be able to be honored and remembered in that way.

KB: Yes. Beautiful. Beautiful.

SMF: Okay, one more question. Let’s say we're going to an honoring celebrating you, and I'm running late--I'm at Home Depot, and I'm running late. I don't have time to go to the grocery store. I only have time to grab something from Home Depot to bring for the altar for you. So what do you want me to pick up from Home Depot to put on your altar?

KB: That's a hilarious question.

[laughter]

KB: I... uh... wow. I never go to Home Depot, so...

SMF: Any hardware store. Let's just go any hardware store.

KB: Well, hardware stores are a lot of fun, um...Wow. I...have...perhaps...perhaps a sledgehammer.

[laughter]

LUNA: Very punk rock.
[laughter]

SMF: Say more about the sledgehammer.

KB: Well, sledgehammer...

SMF: How are you using the sledgehammer?

KB: Sledgehammer can be used to tear down walls. And if I'm on the other side and I'm seeing my folks, my peeps having a struggle and I can knock something out the way for them, give me a hammer. Give me a hammer. I'ma do it. Let's go! You know...

SMF: I love that. Sledgehammer from the hardware store.

KB: There you go.

SMF: KB.

KB: Hey, the ancestor told me, "Hey. (gruff) Sledgehammer. Get a sledgehammer."

SMF: These questions help us know things about ourselves that we didn't know before.

[KB cackles]

LUNA: Yes.

KB: Yeah. There you go.

SMF: So in your, pre-ancestor state, what are you up to, and how do you want folks to find you and follow you?
KB: Yeah. Well, of course, there's QueerRebels.org. You can find out more about what our team--I have an amazing team, Queer Rebels team, at this point. But you can find out what we're up to by going to QueerRebels.org. The Infinite Anachronist is out and available on all of the streaming platforms. So Spotify, Apple Music, all the things. And the next iteration of my music will be coming out--I don't want to give myself a deadline because deadlines stress me out. But I'm thinking sometime this month, it really should be-- October, it should be out and about. All the art is done. I'm just putting some finishing touches on this project, which will be called Merlok Divine, M-e-r-l-o-k Divine. And it's, like I said, singer songwriter stuff, but not your grandpa's singer songwriter stuff.

[laughter]

So even though I could be your grandpa, I could be your grandpa, but I'm not. Punk rock grandpa.

SMF: Punk rock grandpa. Luna, did I miss anything?

LUNA: I think that was everything. Thank you.

SMF: What about you, KB?Is there anything we missed? Anything you wanna say? Anything that came to mind?

KB: I just wanna say that I appreciate you coming up with this idea. And Luna, I appreciate that you are involved in this. It looks the two of you together, it's also an intergenerational kind of situation, and I love that. I really appreciate that you're looking out and looking forward and being real about it. We are all only here fora finite amount of time. While we are here, we should do as much as we can to make it better for the folks who are coming up after us. And I feel like this type of project is something that is

in that vein. You’re doing that thing, and I love y'all for that. So thank you. Thank you for doing it.

SMF: KB, first episode, you got me all teary.

[laughter]

This is such a beautiful, I guess, just sign or omen of what's to come.
Thank you for just lighting this up with us, this beautiful spark, and giving us this beautiful foundation to start with. Thank you. We love you—

KB: Absolutely. Honored. Honored to be the first, interviewee. So thank you.

♪ Drive my car ♪
♪ Drive my car ♪
♪ Drive my car ♪

SMF: Wow. What an amazing conversation. Thank you, KB, and thank you, Luna!

LUNA: Thank you, StormMiguel!

SMF: We did it! We recorded our first episode of Santes.

LUNA: Hell, yes, we did. Let us know what you all think by commenting on our Instagram page: @SantesProject.

SMF: Also, QT BIPOC listeners, please participate in our future ancestors information-gathering project called the Santes Project.

LUNA: It is a tool for QT BIPOC folks to assert how we would like to be interacted with once we become ancestors, from offerings to us, what we want to offer, and how to get our attention.

SMF: Find the form and participate at www.SantesProject.com.

LUNA: See you on the other side!

SMF: And this one too!

[melodic acoustic guitar]
♪♪

END