



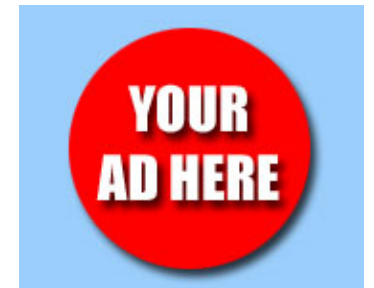
FEBRUARY 2010 ISSUE

Columns ⊕ ⊕ ⊕

QUÉ PASA IN LA

By Rudy Mangual

Brazilian Carnival: Thanks to the efforts of Patricia and Gilberto Leão (caciques of Brazilian Nites Productions), the city of Los Angeles is hosting the West Coast's largest Brazilian Carnival, a tradition that dates back to Rio de Janeiro, circa 1641, when the carioca bourgeoisie started holding balls and masquerade parties, originally mimicking festivities from Paris and other European cities. Subsequently, Rio's carnival started absorbing elements from Native American and African cultures and including the participation of all social classes. The Brazilian Carnival is an annual festival held forty days before Ash Wednesday in the largest South American nation. It must be noted that many Catholics and other practitioners of Christianity traditionally abstained from the consumption of meat and poultry on certain days of Lent, hence the term "carnival" (from carnelevare, "to remove meat" from one's daily diet). Carnival is the most famous holiday in Brazil, although it is rooted



3D Ritmo de Vida
Que Siga La Rumba
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Somos Son
Bilongo

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The Estrada Brothers

Mr. Ray

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[Quicktime](#)

Manny Silvera

Bassed in America

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Bobby Matos

Cuchy Frito Man

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Chembo Corniel

Buena Gente

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Maña

Tranquilito

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Santiago Ceron

Besos de Hada

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Johnny Polanco y Su

Conjunto Amistad

El Gusto de Mi Salsa

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Siempre Salsa All Stars

Salsa Para Siempre

on the pagan festival of Saturnalia, which was adapted to Christianity as a farewell salute to all things bad in a season of religious discipline. It's a time of camaraderie and freedom expressed through an entire week without work. People can choose between celebrating or resting, but most choose to party, day after day and night after night. While parades, costumes and rhythms vary from one region of Brazil to another, it is the southeastern cities of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo that are the most popular for their organized parades led by samba schools competing for prizes and bragging rights every year.

The 10th Annual Brazilian Carnaval 2010 – A Decade of Carnaval Delirium is scheduled for Saturday, February 20, 2010 at Club Nokia in LA Live (Downtown Los Angeles). This music and dance spectacle offers Angelinos an authentic manifestation of Brazil's carnival magic, including dance, costuming, parading, music, drink and traditional Brazilian food. Headlining this year's celebration is (directly from Bahia) the legendary carnaval band Trio Electrico (featuring virtuoso guitarist Armandinho), and Dodo & Osmar, plus other top-notch musicians performing irresistible Carnaval beats. Heating up the dance floor will be the Brazilian Nites Samba Dancers, displaying their batucada rhythms in feather and sequin micro-costumes, in the company of over 20 drummers, plus the locally acclaimed percussionist Chalo Eduardo and Brazilian Beat -featuring Claudinho Smile (an accomplished multi-instrumentalist/vocalist who specializes in samba and MPB). Other highlights include a capoeira show, popular local DJs, Brazilian arts and crafts, and many other surprises throughout the evening. All ages are welcome and costumes are encouraged. This event has been consistently sold-out, drawing a crowd of 3,000-plus carnival-goers for the past 9 years. For tickets and reservations, call (818) 566-1111 or visit www.BrazilianNites.com.

Local veteran salsero **Phil Robinson and Sonora Borinqueña** will be performing at Highland's San Miguel Casino on February 2.

As newcomers in the local salsa scene, **Orquesta Son Caché** will be performing for the grand opening of Salsa Wednesdays at Norwood Bar and Grill, located in the city of North Hills. For more information, call (323) 363-1353.

A couple of local favorites – **Susie Hansen's Latin Band and Orquesta Opa Opa** – are the headliners at The Galaxy Theater's salsa event (in Santa Ana) on February 5. This special evening of salsa music, dancing and dinning starts at 8:00 P.M. For more information and reservations, call (714) 957-0600.

Master percussionist/bandleader **Francisco Aguabella** takes the stage of The Westside JCC Auditorium in West Los Angeles on Saturday, February 6. Doors open at 8:00 P.M. with salsa lessons by James & Cynthia, and live music is offered from 9:30 p.m. to 12:30 a.m., followed by DJ sounds until 2 a.m. For more information, call (310) 284-3638.

The American Legion's Borinquen Post 508 of West Covina celebrates its **Annual Valentines Salsa Dance** on Saturday, February 13, featuring the sounds of Orquesta Tabaco y Ron. An authentic Puerto Rican dinner will be served from 6:00 P.M. to 9:00 P.M. (included with event

admission). For tickets and reservations, call (909) 613-9812 or (714) 357-3864.

El Principe de la Salsa, **Luis Enrique**, will be performing at The Conga Room in LA Live on Thursday, February 25. For tickets and reservations, call (626) 536-8315.

Support all your local artists and their venues. Peace.



A BITE FROM THE APPLE

By Vicki Solá

Photo ©Allen Spatz



This past December 5th, music lovers – particularly those partial to the trombone – enjoyed a gala concert billed as "**El Trombonazo**".

Presented at the Bronx's Hoston Center for the Arts and Culture, the show paid tribute to Johnny Colón, Lewis Kahn, Leopoldo Pineda, Sam Burtis, William Cepeda, and Papo Vásquez. The program began with an electrifying performance by Lucho Cueto and the Black Sugar Sextet, featuring José Mangual, Jr. on vocals. Gilberto Colón, Jr. & Ensalada de

Pulpo served as back-up band for the main six featured trombonists. "I felt extremely honored," says Colón, "to have been chosen to back up the talent, considering that I lead a trombone ensemble myself." With its own trombones wailing away, the dynamic Ensalada de Pulpo thrilled the audience with numbers from its most recent release (*Pulpo's Hot Bread*), before proceeding to remain in the background, while accompanying the Latin boogaloo-era icon (and founder of The East Harlem Music School) Johnny Colón, Orchestra Harlow and Fania All Stars' player Lewis Kahn, legendary Típica '73 lead trombonist Leopoldo Pineda, and the Latin jazz musicians William Cepeda, Papo Vásquez, and Sam Burtis, the latter of whom has played with many notables including Larry Harlow and Tito Allen.

In an emotional moment for all present, Pineda announced his retirement, effective immediately. The evening culminated in what can only be described as trombone heaven – nine of 'em on stage at once!

The Harbor Conservatory for the Performing Arts has announced that the 20th Annual Competition for the Charlie Palmieri Memorial Scholarship – established by Tito Puente – will

take place on Saturday, February 27th. The scholarship, according to the conservatory's Nina Olson, is awarded to intermediate and advanced pianists, aged 12-25, for the study of Latin-style piano. Applicants must demonstrate proficiency playing in the classical or popular Latin genres. The winner receives free tuition for an entire year at the Harbor Conservatory. The competition's jurors are Sonny Bravo, Pablo Mayor, Gustavo Casenave, and the Director of the Harbor Conservatory's Classical Music Program, Dr. Martin Soderberg. Information regarding applications, guidelines, and the schedule of auditions is available at (212) 427-2244, ext. 557, and at www.harborconservatory.org.

I am saddened to report the untimely demise of promoter Mike Palleja, well known in New York's Latin music community for his work with The Latin Four and his dedication to keep Latin music and dance alive for decades. As a friend to so many musicians, he will be sorely missed. I send my condolences to his family and associates.

DJ Jeff's "Hot Pick of the Month": *Influencias* by Guaschara.

Around town... On February 13th, Nyack's West Gate Lounge presents Harlow veteran vocalist Luisito Rosario, fronting his own orchestra, plus a 2:00 A.M. late show, featuring Junior Vega & Ritmos Sabrosos.

Danny Méndez & the Latin Project play at B.B. King's in Manhattan on February 18th.

In addition to Latin music, La Fonda Boricua, located in the heart of El Barrio, now offers jazz events, with groups like the Steve Nelson Quartet, featuring heavyweights Ron Carter, Louis Hayes, and Mulgrew Miller.

On February 26th, **DJ Jeff and Afro-Boriqua Connection's** "Friday Night After-Work Party" (at the Adam Clayton Powell State Office Building's "Windows Over Harlem") hosts "A Tribute to Manny Oquendo", to be performed by Libre, under the direction of Andy González (co-founder, with the late Oquendo, of the watershed group). Oquendo passed away on March 25th, 2009.

Live salsa is coming to New Jersey at Tenafly's **Clinton Inn Hotel Ballroom**, with Gilberto Colón, Jr. & Ensalada de Pulpo (on March 4th) and SonSublime (on March 18th). Further information is available at 201-767-0279.

The East Harlem-born Afro-Filipino **Joe Bataan** headlines "Making Crossroads 2", a fundraiser for my radio station (WFDU-FM), on April 17th. It takes place at Fairleigh Dickinson University's Wilson Auditorium, in Hackensack, New Jersey. Bataan – known for hits like *Gypsy Woman*, *Ordinary Guy*, *Sad Girl*, and *The Bottle* – was influenced by both Latin boogaloo and doo wop. He performs on a roster that includes The Crew (a group led by jazz saxophonist and WFDU-FM on-air personality Tony Smith), Choice (a.k.a. "Jersey City's Bad Boys of Acapella"), and directly from Philly, Quiet Storm. The latter two groups will engage in an "a capella battle." Also appearing is "The Bronx Bomber" Angel Rissoff, who specializes in classic R&B, blues, and nu-soul, and will be singing with Choice.

My WFDU-FM colleague Christine Vitale, host of program "The Group Harmony Alley" is very excited about this upcoming event, which she describes as a "cross-cultural, cross-genre, and cross-promotional series that combines compatible talented local, national, and international artists on one stage for a concert like no other." And I am looking forward to having Joe Bataan on my show again! Further information is available at (201) 707-0418, and online at: <http://makingcrossroads2.eventbrite.com>. Hasta la próxima!



LATIN UPDATE

By Nelson Rodríguez

Hopes are high for 2010 as the music industry looks for new and innovative ways to promote and market its products. Store outlets are looking to go 100% digital, which could possibly end the CD era, as we know it. All of this is not stopping artists from recording music and we can do our part by purchasing the music and attending live events.

With this in mind, let's look at this month's picks, starting with some great material sent to me by a good friend, Omer Pardillo, who emerged from the RMM video department offices in New York and became Celia Cruz and Pedro Knight's right-hand for many years. From his Miami-based Eventus agency, Pardillo is working on the musical documentary "Celia the Queen," which is a must-have for collectors. He is also working on the highly recommended Cachao's Mambo All Stars recording *Como Siempre*, in which German Piferrer leads a wonderful orchestra featuring Tata Palau, Federico Brito, Gerardo Peña, Edwin Bonilla, Ramses Colón, Adalberto "Trompetica" Lara, and Juanito Márquez, among others.



The **Bebo Valdés and Javier Colina** CD *Live at the Village Vanguard* (recorded in November, 2005) is Bebo's first live recording in decades, in which he is joined by bassist Javier Colina for a true adventure into Bebo's musical genius.

Celia Cruz's *Su Musica Por El Mundo En Vivo* CD features many of her big hits in a live format previously unavailable, and with some great photos to boot.

Willy Chirino's last two CDs are *Pa'Lante* (one that has done very well in the radio, especially with the hit *Lo Que Está Pa'Ti*), and *Grandes Exitos En Vivo*, where he is joined by Oscar D'León, Arturo Sandoval, Israel "Cachao" López, Néstor Torres, Paquito Hechevarría and Generoso Jiménez. He also performs two duets with Celia Cruz and Benny Moré, in which their voices are mixed with Chirino's vocals.

Doctor, actress and poet **Anna Estrada** is a SF Bay Area vocalist that brings us a commanding CD, *Obsesión*, which features songs in English, Portuguese and Spanish, as she expresses love in many forms, including her reworking of the standards *Nature Boy* and *Always Something There to Remind Me*.

Brazilian musicians has been producing some wonderful jazz, as illustrated by such recordings as renowned guitarist **Carlos Barbosa-Lima's** CD *Merengue*, which shines with Barbosa-Lima's guitar solos; in addition to bassist Nilson Matta & Brazilian Voyage's CD *Copacabana*, an album that highlights Matta's awesome talent as composer.

New World Flamenco is an accurate title for the collaboration between Germany's famed duo **Tierra Negra** and guitarist **Muriel Anderson**, providing a new twist to the flamenco genre.

Puerto Rico has been very good at keeping up with its native folkloric rhythms, but when you inject them with a youthful tinge, you have a winning formula, as shown by Anibal D'Gracia & Batukealo, a band founded in 2003 by the abovementioned trombonist, whose *Que Siga La Fiesta* project is an excellent party CD for lovers of the Puerto Rican plena, Brazilian batucada, Cuban comparsa and even modern reggaetón.

We have been witnessing how more Latino musicians become involved in straight-ahead jazz, including the cases of Gonzalo Rubalcaba, David Sánchez, Chucho Valdés, Manuel Valera and Miguel Zenón, among many others. Add to this list the Chicago-based pianist **Darwin Noguera's Evolution Quintet**, with their CD *The Gardener*. We commend Noguera as a composer for an interesting jazz album that incorporates cajón playing, elements of son-nica (Nicaraguan son) and so much more.

Manuel Valera is, without a doubt, one of this decade's brightest pianists. He also shines as a composer on his latest CD *Currents*, his first jazz trio recording.

Malena Burke brought a surprising addition to my record collection with her CD *Malena Total*, including various salsa tracks that showcase this talented daughter of Elena Burke (who receives homage from Malena on *Cancion Para Elena*, a tune written by another hot salsa, Aymee Nuviola).

Percussionist **Arturo Stable** and his quintet continue to develop their creativity on their new CD,

Call, Stable's third recording as a leader. It was released during a key period of his life, as influences from his youth merged with his changing musical evolution.

Pablo Menendez & Mezcla bring an enriching venture, *I'll See You In Cuba*, with sounds that deliver a mix of the Cuban forms with so many other genres. It is refreshing to hear how Latin music can be combined with so many other styles from around the world.

This year's holiday CD favorite was **Julito Alvarado del Sur al Norte's** *Navidad del Sur al Norte*, with guests Cheo Feliciano, Tito Rojas, Andy Montañez and Tito Nieves. Look for *Amarga Navidad*, and *Aguinaldo Antillano*, as ideal tunes to be played during Christmas for many years to come.

La Bola is a West New York (N.J.) timba band led by percussionist Aryám Vázquez. Ariance Trujillo functions as its musical director/pianist/arranger/composer, and both of these musicians provide a high level of energy that equals that of their homeland, Cuba. The CD *Sin Comentarios* has 10 strong tracks that will have you dancing from beginning to end.

Old-time friend **Raúl Gallimore** (from Orquesta Inmensidad) sent me the first cut from his recording *Reunión de Gigantes*, featuring vocalists Carlos El Grande, Meñique, Gabino Pampini, Willie Panamá, Ricardo and Víctor del Rosario, Julio Flores, Leslie Daily, and Gallimore himself, all of whom smoke on the hit *Los Cantantes del Solar*.

Omar Sosa is one of the most innovative pianists in Latin music history. Known for his cutting edge style, Sosa has fascinated me for many years. He now delivers a collaboration with composer/arranger/cellist Jaques Morelenbaum, Hamburg's 18-piece NDR Big Band (North German Radio/Norddeutscher Rundfunk) and his own quartet (also featuring Julio Barreto, Marcos Ilukán and Childo Tomas). Recorded in two sessions, the CD *Ceremony* is a jazz recording that acknowledges the Afro-Cuban big bands of Machito, Chico O'Farrill and Dizzy Gillespie, but it is enriched with Sosa's unique flavors. nelrodsalsabeat@yahoo.com



DESDE BORINQUEN

Por Elmer González



UN BUEN AÑO PARA EL RITMO DE PLENA. El 2009 fue un buen año para los grupos que cultivan el ritmo de la plena puertorriqueña. Siguiendo una tendencia que hemos podido apreciar desde hace diez años, decenas de agrupaciones (compuestas mayormente por jóvenes) amenizaron una gran variedad de actividades públicas durante todo el año.

Atrás quedaron los tiempos en que la plena se llegó a considerar como "música navideña", limitando su divulgación a una época festiva de carácter anual. También quedó atrás la tendencia de referirse a este ritmo como algo "folklórico", un término que suele ser relacionado con costumbres o manifestaciones musicales atadas al pasado. La plena sigue viva y es un fenómeno en creciente evolución.

Hoy se percibe una diversidad de arreglos que siguen la proyección "global" de combinar diferentes sonidos y expresiones asociadas con distintas épocas y regiones. Con mucho respeto y profesionalismo, tales músicos jóvenes continúan enriqueciendo la plena sin sacrificar su cotidiana función narrativa, su espíritu festivo y las estructuras rítmicas peculiares que crearon los arquitectos de dicho género desde la primera mitad del siglo pasado.

La popularidad de esta forma musical se pone de relieve en varios discos que fueron editados durante todo el año y que recibieron buen apoyo por parte de un gran segmento de la población de jóvenes boricuas. En el 2009, hubo una productiva cosecha de discos pleneros, en comparación con previos años de la primera década del presente siglo.

- 1) Diez años de lanzar al mercado su primer disco, el grupo **Viento de Agua** editó cuidadosamente la excelente producción titulada "Fruta Madura", resaltando la participación del percusionista y vocalista Héctor "Tito" Matos y la del saxofonista, arreglista y compositor Ricardo Pons, además de varios artistas invitados.
- 2) El tamborero **Ángel "Cachete" Maldonado** (liderando el grupo Los Majaderos) editó el disco "Rumba Boricua Campesina," combinando los ritmos de rumba, plena y bomba. La voz de Ángel Luis Torruellas imprime un distinto sabor plenero a varios de los 14 temas incluidos en el disco, cuyo sabor campesino se deriva de la ejecución del joven cuatrista Christian Nieves.
- 3) **Aníbal De Gracia & Batukéalo** es otro trabajo que resalta el legado de la plena. Con mucha energía, los ritmos de la rumba, la bomba la samba y la plena se entrelazan aquí para prender el fogón festivo de cualquier actividad bailable.

- 4) "En plena rumba" de **Truco & Zaperoko** fue uno de los grandes aciertos disqueros del 2009. Con su habitual combinación de la rumba cubana y la plena boricua, el grupo fusiona admirablemente los tambores de plena con las tumbadoras, presentando así una propuesta irresistible a los bailadores.
- 5) El grupo **Zakandela** (incluyendo a varios antiguos integrantes de Plena Libre) se destacó por su presencia, a través de todo el año, en diferentes actividades públicas. Grabado "en vivo", el disco "Zakandeléate" recoge parcialmente la energía y el sabor que tal grupo suele exhibir en la tarima.
- 6) La nueva generación está presente también en el segundo disco del grupo "Nanddy y Plena Juventud", dirigido por el percusionista y trombonista **Nanddy López**, cuyo disco "La nueva cara de la plena" ofrece evidencia contundente del interés de los músicos jóvenes en los ritmos de la plena.
- 7) Otro trabajo destacado fue el CD "Esta plena" del saxofonista **Miguel Zenón**, el más versado de los saxofonista puertorriqueños de jazz en la actualidad. Junto al maestro Tito Matos, Zenón traduce con elocuencia los ritmos de la plena al lenguaje del jazz sin que se pierda la esencia de ambas expresiones. Uno de los mejores discos del año.

Merecen también mencionarse otros tres discos:

- 8) "Desde mi balcón" de **Andrés "El Jíbaro" Jiménez**.
- 9) "Alegre vengo cantando" de **José Nogueras**.
- 10) "Expresiones" de **Barreto y su Plena**.



DESDE LA BAHÍA

By Jesse "Chuy" Varela

FELIZ AÑO NUEVO: The promise of a new year is always invigorating, as it offers a new start in the daily race with life's trials and tribulations. The 7.0 magnitude earthquake that struck Haiti on January 12, 2010, is one of those tribulations that have stunned the entire world. Communities all around the globe were mobilized to get relief aid to the surviving disaster victims as they were being dug out of the mass rubble. The SF Bay Area was no exception.



HAITI BENEFITS: In the Bay Area, timbalero/bandleader Tito García organized one of the first salsa benefits for Haiti at San Francisco's Café Cocomo on Tuesday, January 19. "Dance Your Ass Off for Haiti" featured García's fine Orquesta Internacional, along with an all-star cast of guest musicians. DJ Luis Medina, DJ Antonio, DJ Mendy, and Fab Fred also donated their time for the cause.



"After seeing all the images on CNN of the Haiti crisis, I felt compelled to put in my two cents for the relief effort. I got together with Café Cocomo and they are allowing me and the other musicians to use Café Cocomo for a benefit concert for the Haiti Relief Fund through the American Red Cross," wrote García in an e-mail prior to the event.

Among the participating musicians were Christian Tumalan, Coto Pincheira, Julio Bravo, Kevin Silveira, Mike Spiro, Jesús Díaz, Rick Rangel, Valeriana Quevedo, Eric Rangel, Carlos Ramírez, Dave Scott, Marvin McFadden, Scott Englebright, Jim Burr, Darren Smith, and Fito Reinoso. Despite rainstorms and chilly temperatures, people turned out for this event and several thousand dollars were raised.

On the other side of town, at the Glas Kat (a fine nightclub south of Market Street), there were two benefit parties for Haiti organized by Dinah Bowen. The entertainment was provided by DJs Super Chino and Él de la Clave, along with the live salsa sounds of Orquesta Humbria. Upstairs, a Bachata social event included a free bachata lesson by dance instructor Rodchata, while DJ Guapo supplied the music.

Props to the good-hearted people who helped make these events happen.

KARL PERAZZO & AVANCE: "Siempre pa'lante, nunca pa'trás" should be the motto of Karl Perazzo (pictured above), a percussionist who has garnered worldwide acclaim as a member of the Santana Band. Most recently, he teamed up with Sheila Escovedo and was featured in the all-star band chosen for the "Latin Fiesta" hosted by President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama at the White House. It's just one more feather in the cap of an extraordinary musician whose resumé includes stints with Prince and many pop greats.

Karl Perazzo, a San Francisco native who still resides in the Bay Area, continues to cultivate his bandleading qualities by fronting a top-notch salsa ensemble called Avance. In 2009, the group released its fourth album, *Incontrolable*, on Mona Records (a label owned by Karl and his wife

Debbie). In my opinion, it stands as the best Bay Area salsa album of that year. The collective talent and seasoned experience of its members is what gives Avance a dynamic edge. The polished frontline singers – Armando and Jeff Córdoba, Jimmy Flores and Luis Morales – are capable of covering a variety of genres, as shown on the CD *Incontrolable*. The band is made up of musicians that bring high-scale skills and chops. Mike Rinta is featured on trombone, and he is credited for many of the arrangements. Cuban percussion ace Carlos Caro adds his tremendous talent to the date. Overall, this album is one of the band's best!

VOICES OF LATIN ROCK EXPERIENCE: In addition, Karl Perazzo has recently taken over the reins of the Voices of Latin Rock Band. As its musical director, he has created a monster ensemble that can play anything! This was demonstrated on Thursday, January 21, at Bimbo's 365 Club in San Francisco, where he joined forces with Tal Mahal, Lenny Williams (Tower of Power), Tony Lindsey (Santana), Lester Chambers (The Chambers Brothers.), Fred Sánchez (El Chicano) and Tom Johnston (Doobie Brothers).

With the help of Mike Rinta, the Latin-tinged arrangements of said artists' hits were framed in new and exciting ways that surprised and delighted that those who attended the Autism Awareness Benefit organized by Dr. Bernardo González, Ron Sansoe and Jeff Trager.

Watching Perazzo direct the 13-member band was reminiscent of Johnny Pacheco and Tito Puente's bandleading styles. He would be playing and guiding the tempos, and then would suddenly drop the sticks to conduct the dynamics of a horn passage. His leadership is a testament to a career built on exceptional talent and professionalism. ¡Qué viva Karl Perazzo! ¡Hasta la próxima! chuyvarela@aol.com



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