



## MARCH 2010 ISSUE

# Reviews

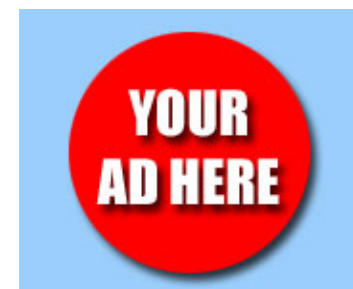
## PICK OF THE MONTH

### PAUL LÓPEZ'S SALSA/LATIN JAZZ BIG BAND

#### Yo Soy Ritmo (Piazaul Records)

The Los Angeles native Paul López (nicknamed "Paulee" by the late Tito Puente) is an accomplished trumpeter/arranger/composer /bandleader, who has worked with some of the world's top Latin and jazz artists, including Noro Morales, Tito Puente, Machito, Miguelito Valdés, Stan Kenton, Boyd Raeburn, Don Ellis, Willie Bobo, Mongo Santamaría, Billy Taylor, Chico O'Farrill, and Pucho Brown. He led his own L.A.-based mambo band – the Paul López Orchestra – from 1962 to 1964, performing extensively throughout Southern California and displaying his unique Latin jazz flavor. He spent most of 1965 in Puerto Rico, composing and arranging for San Juan's WNEL, a radio station that featured a good amount of live music. His talents earned him numerous composing and arranging assignments at Hollywood recording studios and Las Vegas shows, as well as at music productions for the Joey Bishop and Merv Griffin television shows. During the 1980s and 1990s, López served as co-leader of the "H.M.A. Latin Jazz Orchestra", a big band organized by the Hispanic Musicians Association (H.M.A.) of Los Angeles. Along with HMA president Bobby Rodríguez, he recorded two excellent CDs, *California Salsa I* and *II*, in which López functioned as the primary arranger.

*Yo Soy Ritmo* is Paul López's latest production as leader of his own salsa/Latin jazz big band. This recording features four sessions (two from 2005 and two from 2006), which were mixed and mastered in 2009. The repertoire features ten original scores by López that reflect a mammoth ability to compose and arrange for a big band. The up-tempo tracks swing non-stop with awesome orchestrations, while the only bolero – *April Nocturne* – is a sensual jewel reminiscent of the golden era of New York's Mambo Kings (Rodríguez, Puente and Machito). The Paul López Big Band's rhythm section includes Donald Vega and Sandy Stein (piano),



**3D Ritmo de Vida**  
Que Siga La Rumba  
[Windows Media](#)  
[Quicktime](#)

**Somos Son**  
Bilongo

[Windows Media](#)  
[Quicktime](#)

---

**The Estrada Brothers**

Mr. Ray

[Windows Media](#)  
[Quicktime](#)

---

**Manny Silvera**

Bassed in America

[Windows Media](#)  
[Quicktime](#)

---

**Bobby Matos**

Cuchy Frito Man

[Windows Media](#)  
[Quicktime](#)

---

**Chembo Corniel**

Buena Gente

[Windows Media](#)  
[Quicktime](#)

---

**Maña**

Tranquilito

[Windows Media](#)  
[Quicktime](#)

---

**Santiago Ceron**

Besos de Hada

[Windows Media](#)  
[Quicktime](#)

---

**Johnny Polanco y Su**

Conjunto Amistad

El Gusto de Mi Salsa

[Windows Media](#)  
[Quicktime](#)

---

**Siempre Salsa All Stars**

Salsa Para Siempre

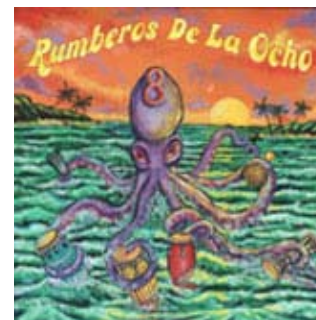
René Camacho (bass), Joey de León (timbal), Michito Sánchez and Papo Rodríguez (congas), Robertito Melendez (bongó) and Danilo Lozano (güiro). Soloists include Bennie Maupin, Larry Covelli and Javier Medina, plus the likes of Javier Vergara (tenor sax), Steve Huffstetter, Ramón Flores, Ron Barrows and Mike McGuffey (trumpets), Ray Pizzi (alto sax), Francisco Torres, Alejandro Carballo and Andrew Lippman (trombones), Scarlet Rivera (electric violin), and Joe Pérez (baritone sax). Standout tracks include the opening title track (Yo Soy Ritmo), as well as Salsa Canon, and A Study in Salsa Minor. – *Rudy Mangual*

## REVIEWS

### RUMBEROS DE LA OCHO

#### Rumberos de la Ocho (Spamusica)

Hailing from the streets of Miami, Florida, Rumberos de la 8 – an all-star ensemble of percussionists and singers of Cuban and Puerto Rican ancestry – delivers its latest production. Loyal to the traditions of Afro-Cuban rumba, the group features the talents of timbalero/vocalist Tomás Díaz and vocalist Sonyaisi Feldman, both natives of Matanzas, Cuba, who share familial ties with the legendary rumba masters Los Muñequitos de Matanzas, in addition to the following bandmates: Lázaro Alfonso (congas/batá/vocals), brother of Jorge "El Niño" Alfonso and ex-member of the popular Cuban groups Irakere and Pancho Amat, among others; the Havana native Yoel del Sol (timbal/vocals), first-place winner of "Percuba 1995" (the biggest and most important percussion festival in Havana, Cuba); Puerto Rican Little Ray Romero, Jr. (congas/chéquere), son of the legendary percussionist Little Ray Romero; Puerto Rican JJ Freire (congas/chéquere), also known as the trap drummer of the popular Latin rock group Los Bacilos; and Cuban Boris Monterey (vocals), current member of the Miami-based group Timbalaye. This is the first analog rumba recording out of Miami in over 20 years. If you enjoy Afro-Caribbean drumming and rumba, this recording is for you. Favorite tracks include the rumbas *Descarga 8*, *Oddié*, and *Ave María Morena*. – *Rudy Mangual*



### SALSAMBA

#### Mojito Blues (Clave Records)

Celebrating its 25th anniversary as a band, the Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania-based Latin jazz quintet Salsamba releases its sixth recording, titled *Mojito Blues*. Led by guitarist Eric Susoeff, the group currently features George Jones (congas), Paul Thompson (bass), Eric DeFade (flute/sax) and Thomas Wendt (drums). A total of 11 tracks showcase the band's best recorded work to date,



including favorites such as the title track (*Mojito Blues*, a funky chachachá); Salsasamba's mambo treatment of Cedar Walton's "Hindsight"; *Agora Tá* (a tasty samba featuring guest Brazilian vocalist Kenia); and *Mémoria E Fado*, which it is the CD's big production number, mixing elements of chamber music with jazz modalities and featuring various guest musicians – Louis Lowenstein (cello), Patrick Susoeff (piano), and soprano Lilly Abreu) – *Rudy Mangual*



## **PABLO ASLÁN** **Tango Grill** **(Zoho)**

Se puede alegar que en el tango no existe un tipo de improvisación comparable a la del jazz, ya que se trata de un género usualmente fundamentado en arreglos musicales.

Claro que el tango posee, sin embargo, una tradición improvisada que data de la década del 1910: en el argot porteño, tocar "a la parrilla" significa tocar sin arreglos anotados o premeditados. La antedicha tradición se manifiesta en el nuevo disco del pionero del tango-jazz llamado Pablo Aslán, bajista argentino con domicilio actual en Nueva York.

Grabado en Buenos Aires, el CD "Tango Grill" congrega a un elenco excepcional de tangueros y jazzistas que logran reinventar una docena de "clásicos" porteños del siglo XX. Sin desviarse demasiado de las melodías y armonías de cada tango seleccionado, Aslán y sus secuaces brindan sus propios floreos imaginativos y adornos libertarios. Es evidente que la incorporación de la trompeta de Gustavo Bergalli y la batería de Daniel Piazzolla (nietao del legendario Astor) inyecta un caudal de repentinas probabilidades al formato tanguero, pero uno debe considerar también otros factores, incluyendo las tendencias jazzísticas del pianista Nicolás Ledesma y el violinista Ramiro Gallo, así como las impecables credenciales tangueras del bandoneonista Néstor Marconi (antiguo integrante del legendario "Quinteto Real"). – *Luis Tamargo*



## **JOSÉ LUIS MORÁN** **El Gato Salsero** **(José Luis Morán)**

A native of Maracaibo, Venezuela, José Luis Morán is also a veteran salsa vocalist (with a career spanning over two decades) who has performed throughout his homeland, the United States and more recently, Europe. In 2005, while residing in Madrid, Spain, he established his own band, Orquesta Madridcaibo, composed of musicians from Venezuela, Colombia, Cuba, México and Spain. After a few tours throughout the Iberian Peninsula, Morán and Orquesta Madridcaibo earned the heart-felt respect of many Latin Americans living in Spain, as well as that of the native salseros and aficionados of Afro-Caribbean rhythms, who praise them as



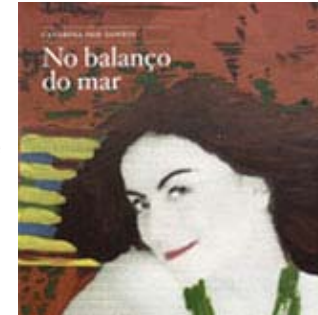
local favorites. This is why Morán was nicknamed "El Gato Salsero" (the Salsa Cat) in recognition of his musical talents.

This self-produced CD, recorded in 2008 and released in 2009, showcases the dance-friendly skills of El Gato Salsero, who authored most of the tracks. Percussionist Jaime "Tamborera" Vásquez shares the musical direction of the band with Morán. Highlighting this recording are the selections *Tamborera Madridcaibo*, *La Rumba del Barrio*, and their version of the José Luis Cortés composition *El Más Chévere*. – Rudy Mangual

## CATARINA DOS SANTOS

### No Balanço Do Mar (Mar Creation)

This debut recording from the multi-talented Portuguese singer/songwriter Catarina dos Santos reveals her unique understanding of the musical universe she is so much a part of, from the melancholy Portuguese harmonies and melodies, to the energy of African rhythms and the passion of Cape Verdean creole culture. Born in Barreiro, Portugal, Catarina absorbed everything musically Portuguese, as well as world rhythms, from Africa to Brazil. She started her study of jazz in Lisbon, and soon thereafter, relocated to New York City to truly experience the magic of the genre. After settling in the Big Apple and after several collaborations with Grammy-award winning artists, Dos Santos was finally ready to showcase her solo work to the world. *No Balanço Do Mar* (Rocking in the Sea) features 10 scores, all written by the artist and arranged by her and Eduardo Nazarian (piano/keyboards). The selections bring to light a fresh concoction of Portuguese, Brazilian and African-inspired compositions with jazz, pop, Antillean and Mediterranean modalities. Standout tracks include the opener *Mãe Bia Rosa*, *Kimbombó*, and the closer, *El Barrio Mayombe*. – Rudy Mangual



[Home](#) | [Features](#) | [Columns](#) | [Hit Parades](#) | [Reviews](#) | [Calendar](#) | [News](#) | [Contacts](#) | [Shopping](#) | [E-Back Issues](#)