

Columns ⊕ ⊕ ⊕

APRIL 2011 ISSUE

QUE PASA IN LA

By Rudy Mangual



Victor Manuelle

Once again, the summer season approaches the City of Angels and preparations are underway for the upcoming annual festivals and concert series that are an escape for Angelenos.

The Los Angeles Philharmonic Association announced its 2011 Concert Season at the landmark Hollywood Bowl in Los Angeles. The season's opener on June 17, 2011 features the **Hollywood Bowl Orchestra** conducted by **Thomas Wilkins** and honoring Harry Connick, Jr., among other legendary Hall of Fame inductees.

Music Director **Gustavo Dudamel** conducts the Los Angeles Philharmonic in 14 weeks of subscription concerts that include two LA Phil commissions, both of which are world premieres, plus a Green Umbrella series concert with an LA Phil commission and world premiere. The 2011/12 season finds Dudamel at the helm of numerous large-scale projects. The Summer Concert Season runs from June 17, 2011 through September 24, 2011. Highlighting the season are performances by **Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra** with **Wynton Marsalis**, and **Hugh Masekela** (June 22); The **Hollywood Bowl Orchestra** with special guests **Daryl Hall & John Oates** on a July 4th Fireworks Spectacular concert (July 2, 3, & 4th); **LA PHIL** conducted by **David Newman** performing West Side Story (July 8 & 9); **LA PHIL** conducted by **Gustavo Dudamel** and pianist **Lang Lang** (July 12 & 14); **Rodrigo y Gabriela** plus **Javier Limón** and **Buika** (Aug. 12 & 13); **Hollywood Bowl Orchestra** conducted by **John Mauceri** performing Walt Disney's Fantasia (Aug, 19, 20, & 21); and **Orquesta Buena Vista Social Club** featuring **Omara Portuondo, Arturo Sandoval & The L.A. All Star Big Band**, plus **Ninety Miles** featuring **Stefon Harris, David Sánchez**, and **Christian Scott** (Aug. 24). Other upcoming concerts at the Hollywood Bowl include Star Wars in Concert featuring **The Hollywood Bowl Orchestra** conducted by **Dirk Brossé** (June 3 & 4); **The 33rd Playboy Jazz Festival** (June 11 & 12); **22nd Mariachi USA Festival** (June 18), and **Santana / George Lopez** (Oct. 1). For tickets and more information, visit www.HollywoodBowl.com.

Happenings around town: **Omar Sosa Afreecanos Quintet** at The Getty (May 14).

The 9th Annual Mi Son Cubano Festival at the Frank G. Bonelli Park in San Dimas (May 15) with headliner **Roberto Torres** plus local favorites **Son y Clave, Johnny Polanco y su Conjunto Amistad, Son Mayor**, and **Orquesta Charangoa**.

The 13th Annual Los Angeles Salsa Congress at the Westin Bonaventure Hotel in Downtown LA (May 26 -29). Headliners include **Victor Manuelle & his Orchestra, Grupo Latin Vibe, Xtreme**, and local favorites **Chino Espinoza y Los Dueños del Son**, and **Johnny Polanco y su Conjunto Amistad** with special guest **Choco Orta**. For tickets and more information, visit www.mysalsacongress.com.

Dia de San Juan Festival at the Frank G. Bonelli Park in San Dimas (June 12). Headliners include **Frankie Vazquez, Michael Stuart**, and **Ray de la Paz**, among others. Support all your local artists and their venues. Peace.



A Bite from the Apple

By Vicki Sola



Bassoon Goes Latin Jazz! is the intriguing title of **Daniel Smith's** new release. Recommended to this writer by saxophonist Pete Miranda, Smith made the following comment: "Having spent many years recording and performing in classical, crossover, and now jazz, *Bassoon Goes Latin Jazz!* is a culmination of a long process to bring the bassoon into the mainstream of solo instruments... in both jazz and classical music".

After the initial astonishment, the unlikely instrument's dark and heavy tones prove to be up to the task as Smith adeptly accomplishes his mission — just take a listen as he swings away rapidly or as he weaves his way in a subtle manner.

Smith is the only bassoon soloist to perform and record both in the realms of jazz and classical music. He has played everything from Baroque concerti to ragtime. In 2010, he was chosen in the Downbeat Jazz Critics Poll as "Miscellaneous Instrument Rising Star". He has also been selected twice as finalist in the "Player of the Year" category by the Jazz Journalists Association.

"The players on this new album," says Smith, "are all world-class, and the musical selections were carefully picked over a period of many months." Pianist Daniel Kelly (identified as a Lincoln Center Institute Repertory Artist since 2002) has performed and/or recorded with Cándido, Ray Barretto, Bobby Sanabria, Michael Brecker, Joe Lovano and Oliver Lake, among others. Bassist Michael O'Brien's resumé includes collaborations with Rubén Blades, Harry Connick, Jr. and Gene Pitney. Drummer Vincent Ector's credits highlight his work with Ron Carter, Randy Weston, Freddy Hubbard, Charles Earland, Hank Jones, James Moody, Jimmy Heath, Lou Donaldson, Claudio Roditi and The Dizzy Gillespie Alumni All-Stars (Ector can be heard around the city with the Charles Mingus Big Band, The George Gee Orchestra, and his own group). Neil Clarke, who plays Latin percussion and has traveled throughout the world, maintained thirteen-year association with Harry Belafonte, and paid his dues with Randy Weston, Benny Powell, Miriam Makeba, Dianne Reeves, David Sanborne, Noel Pointer and Arthur Prysock. Trombonist Roswell Rudd was chosen (in 2003, 2004, 2005, 2009, and 2010) as Trombonist of the Year by the Jazz Journalists Association, and has worked with Archie Shepp, Cecil Taylor, Carla Bley and Herbie Nichols. Guitarist Sandro Albert has performed

with Airto Moriera, Flora Purim, Milton Nascimento, Herb Alpert and Dionne Warwick. Check out my favorites tracks on this dynamic production — *Manteca* and *Comecandela*.

Known as "El Galán de la Salsa," vocalist **Héctor Ramos** is out with another high-energy production: *Que Las Dos Me Quieran*. Arrangement credits go to Edwin Sánchez, Louie Cruz, Oscar Hernández, Efraín Rolón and René Hernández. Musicians onboard are Sánchez (piano), Carlos Enrique (bass), John Walsh (trumpet), Chris Washburne (trombone), Papo Pepín (congas and bongó), Harry Adorno (timbal), Tito Allen and Aris Martínez (vocal chorus). This album includes Ramos' renditions of Eddie Palmieri's *Mi Cumbia* and Lalo Rodríguez's *Deseo Salvaje*.

DJ Jeff's "Hot Pick of the Month": La Kshamba's *Sí Nos Quedara Poco Tiempo*.

Congratulations are in order —**Oscar Hernández & The Spanish Harlem Orchestra** garnered a Grammy for *Viva La Tradición*. In my humble opinion, Hernández is a giant of our times.

Springtime in Manhattan starts off with a bang: The First Annual Big Apple Salsa Festival, organized by the New York Salsa Congress producer John "Choco" Knight. Eddie Torres and the Mambo King Orchestra—featuring Eddie Torres' All-Star Dancers (April 1st), and vocalist Jimmy Delgado (April 2nd)—are slated to keep dancers moving at the New York Hilton. The New Swing Sextet (April 3rd), performs offsite, at Club Iguana, offering attendees from all over the globe an opportunity to experience some of New York City's typical ambiance. This festival also includes the following activities: Latin Dance Workshops, Youth and Adult Performance Showcases, and Professional Dance Championships. Further information is available at <http://www.bigapplesalsafestival.com/>.

Around town... Salsa Wednesdays continue at El Taller Boricua. This month's roster: Manny Oquendo's Libre (April 6th), Fajardo, Jr. y sus Estrellas (April 13th), Jimmy Delgado's Orchestra (April 20th, featuring Renzo Padilla on vocals), and Conjunto Imagen (April 27th).

Eddie Palmieri plays Latin jazz downtown at SOB's on April 6th.

The debut and CD release celebration of trombonist **David Chamberlain's** "Band of Bones" will take place on April 14th at the Zinc Bar.

On April 24th, **Larry Umaña & Pequeño Son** will ignite The Whiskey Café.

On April 15th, the Association of Dominican Classical Artists and the Dominican Studies Institute will present "The Music of Rafael Petitón Guzmán," described as an evening of merengues, danzas, danzones and boleros, featuring Jessica Valiente's Los Más Valientes, the Camerata of Washington Heights, and various members of the Association of Dominican Classical Artists. This event will take place at the City College of New York. Admission is free, but registration is a must. Further information is available at 212-650-7496, and at <http://www.cunydsi-concerts.eventbrite.com/>.

¡Hasta la próxima!



Latin Beat Update

By Nelson Rodriguez

As our music world continues to evolve from the traditional ways of promotion, marketing and sales, and as we look for new approaches to provide music to the fans, there is one medium that still remains constantly available, and that is radio. The importance of radio is even more important now than ever. Record stores are becoming a thing of the past and record outlets have less and less new music, while compilations are the norm. The constant re-issuing of "greatest hits" or "the best of" certain artists (and in many cases, these compilations have nothing to do with "the greatest" or "the best of") by labels deceptively utilizing a different CD cover has become a joke. The better compilations that I recommend are those of the rare vintage music that is impossible to get in LP format (unless you want to spend hundreds of dollars) and has not been reissued as a compact disc. Some great ones include Pijuan y su Sexteto, El Combo Moderno, Belmonte and his Afro-Latin Seven, Los Dementes, El Afrocombo, Rafael Labasta, and Los Hermanos Colón.

There are also some great compilations that are comprised of a variety of different artists, such as *DJ El Chino Presents Los Dinosaurios, Volumes 1 & 2* (Salsa and Mambos Underground). Some of the rarest music updates can be found on the webpage of Solar Latin Club that includes hot new releases and collaborations offered by DJs from all corners of the world. What makes the site a good one is that anyone who can add information in reference to the vintage recordings (date of recording or release, credits, composers, musicians) is welcome to do so as part of the process of educating all website readers.

Congratulations to **Henry Brun & The Latin Playerz** on their *20th Anniversary* release that includes various unreleased tracks (*Bye Bye Blackbird, Jugo de Piña, Naked, Get It While You Can, I Say a Little Prayer for You*, and one song I played during the Christmas holidays: *Señor Grinch*).

Oscar Villarini, son of the famed arranger/trumpeter Tommy Villarini, makes his bandleading debut (along with vocalist **Víctor Gabriel Rosario**) through the Villarini Salsa Project's CD *En Tu Tiempo*. Produced by Tommy Villarini, this is an excellent dance album that has already generated various hits.



The CD *“Tito Puente Masterworks Live”* was recorded by the Manhattan School of Music’s Afro-Cuban Jazz Orchestra conducted by **Bobby Sanabria (Pictured)**. This is a recording that deserves a Grammy nomination, as it highlights Puente’s great musical legacy, interpreted by some of today’s most talented young New York-based Latin musicians, including Alex López, Cristian Rivera, Anthony Stanco, Christian Sands, Norman Edwards, Paul Stodolka, Daniel Jamieson, Benjamin Britton, Eddy Hackett, Tim Vaughn, Jonas Ganzemuller, Michael Sherman, and many others. This recording was conducted on November 3, 2008, at the Manhattan School of Music’s John C. Borden Auditorium.

We recently lost another veteran that now joins the Heavenly All-Stars: Eugenio Hernández (better known as **Gene Hernández**), who was in the process of putting together a new recording, along with Mike García (also of *Típica Novel* fame). Before his demise, Gene Hernández, fronting his group *Salsa Clásica* did manage to record *El Cubanazo*. He was renowned for his composition *Isla del Encanto* (popularized by Orquesta Broadway and featuring its author as vocalist).

The two-CD **Machito** compilation titled “El Padrino” encompasses material extracted from the vaults of the Seeco, Tico, Roulette, West Side Latino and Cotique labels, including many tracks that deliver a taste of the genius of Machito’s awesome Afro-Cubans, featuring Mario Bauzá, Graciela, and René Hernández.

Like vintage wine, vocalist **Frankie Morales** continues to get better as he gets older. This is shown on his latest CD *No Te Equivoques...Es Frankie Morales*.

Bobby Matos & His Afro Latin Jazz Ensemble offer a new CD that contains music either composed by the band members or inspired by their families and cultural influences. *Beautiful As the Moon* was recorded live at the San Diego City College's Saville Theater for KSDS Jazz (88 FM).

Luis Conte's *En Casa de Luis* was actually recorded in his own house, while hanging out with his musical associates, and everything but the kitchen sink was utilized to elaborate what is bound to be regarded as a historic session. Just listen to what he does to the Peggy Lee classic titled *Fever*. Known as the favorite percussionist of Madonna, Phil Collins, Barbara Streisand, Cachao, Shakira, James Taylor, Dianne Reeves, and Ray Charles, Conte shines on his seventh bandleading release.



DESDE BORINQUEN

Por Elmer González

Fotos por Julio Costoso

DIA NACIONAL DE LA SALSA



Luigi Texidor



Elias Lopez



Luisito Ayala



Oscar D'Leon



Andy Montañez

DIA NACIONAL DE LA SALSA. El domingo 20 de marzo se celebró el tradicional concierto del Día Nacional de la Salsa en el Estadio Hiram Bithorn de San Juan. Fue la vigésimo octava edición de dicha reunión en la cumbre de los salseros puertorriqueños.

Este año fueron homenajeadas las orquestas Costa Brava y Puerto Rican Power. También se rindió tributo a los cantantes Tito Allen, Luigi Texidor y Paquito Guzmán.

La presentación estelar correspondió a las "Puerto Rico All Stars", orquesta fundada por Luisito Ayala hace 30 años con el auspicio de Papo Lucca, Roberto Roena y Bobby Valentín.

También se incluyó la orquesta del timbalero Edwin Clemente, así como al cantante venezolano Oscar D León (acompañado por la Orquesta del Día Nacional de la Salsa, bajo la dirección de Louis García), y fue bien aplaudida la intervención de Tito Rojas junto a sus antiguos compañeros de la Puerto Rican Power.



Tito Rojas



Tito Allen



Manolito Gonzalez



Jose Feliciano



Alex D'Castro

La “sorpresa” de la tarde fue la participación del cantante boricua José Feliciano, quien cantó el tema “Represento”, con el respaldo de su guitarra y del sonido salsero de Luisito Ayala y su creación orquestal de los años 70—Puerto Rican Power, la cual cerró con broche de oro el concierto esa noche con su sonido afinado y poderoso.

Allí vimos a ciertos personajes que en algún momento dado formaron parte de tal “trabuco” en la antedicha década, incluyendo a los cantantes Andy Montañez, Paquito Guzmán y Luigi Texidor, así como al bajista Polito Huerta y a los percusionistas Manolito González y Papo Pepín, entre otros.

La mencionada orquesta fue reforzada por Papo Lucca, Piro Rodríguez, Ito Torres, Tommy Villarini, Gunda Merced, Toñito Vázquez, Eliot Cintrón, etc.

El festival de este año fue menos concurrido que en ocasiones anteriores. Quizás un alza en el costo de los boletos dejó en la periferia del estado a cientos de personas, quienes también celebraron tal festividad anual a su manera en la circunferencia de estacionamiento vehicular a través de sus espontáneos bailes, juegos de dominó y puestos improvisados de golosinas y frituras típicas.



Este evento se ha caracterizado, desde sus inicios, por presentar los artistas representativos de los mejores años de la "salsa clásica". Es un concierto que estimula la nostalgia. Sin embargo, a medida que pasa el tiempo, disminuyen las posibilidades de continuar recordando y recreando los conceptos orquestales de antaño



Jose Feliciano



Endel Dueño



Oscar D'Leon



Edwin Clemente



Andy Montañez



Polito Huertas



Paquito Guzman



Papo Pepin

Lamentablemente, la emisora salsera de mayor audiencia en Borinquen (Z93) no difunde la producción salsera de artistas y orquestas provenientes de territorios situados en el exterior de Puerto Rico y Nueva York. Para muchos aficionados locales, la salsa se percibe como un fenómeno que no ha trascendido más allá de Borinquen y la Gran Manzana. De ese modo, el público no se percata de los buenos trabajos salseros que han sido realizados en Cuba, Colombia, Venezuela, y Perú.

Ya es hora que la tarima grande del Día Nacional de la Salsa reciba a músicos procedentes de dichas comarcas, del mismo modo en que el susodicho auditorio brinda su cordial bienvenida a cientos de visitantes internacionales que concurren a esta peregrinación anual de los salseros de Borinquen. gonzalezlmer@yahoo.com

