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Columns

APRIL 2012 ISSUE

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QUÉ PASA IN LA

By Rudy Mangua

With the arrival of Spring in Southern California, everyone is anticipating the upcoming summer season of concerts and festivals that annually deluge the West Coast with the best of the music world.

Our northern neighbors get the party going early with "The 4th Annual San Francisco Salsa Festival, scheduled for April 5-7, 2012, at The Westin Hotel in San Francisco. This year's event includes three nights of world-class performances, dancing and workshops with some of the top salsa instructors in the business. Musical headliners include Danilo y su Orquesta Universal, Avance, and The Pacific Mambo Orchestra. For tickets and reservations, visit www.sfsalsafestival.com/hotel.htm.



Bloque 53
Cogelo Ahi
Windows Media
Quicktime

Chico Álvarez
El Indio Caonabo
Windows Media
Quicktime

Bio Ritmo
La Muralla



Streaming Music

Louie Cruz Beltran

Paint the Rhythm
Windows Media
Quicktime



Cintron Band Live

Human Nature
Windows Media
Quicktime

Vanelis

Como Lo Extraño
Windows Media
Quicktime

Nayibe

Borinquen
Windows Media
Quicktime

Luis González

Spain
Windows Media
Quicktime

Rolando Sanchez

Vamonos De Fiesta
Windows Media
Quicktime

Steve Pouchie

Watch Ur Wallet
Windows Media
Quicktime

Somos Son

Bilongo

Local salseros as well as international salsa dancers are getting ready for the granddaddy of all the salsa congresses in the world - "The 14th Annual Los Angeles Salsa Congress," presented by Albert Torres Productions. This year's event takes place May 24 through May 27 at the beautiful Westin Bonaventure Hotel in downtown Los Angeles. Headliners include Oscar D'Leon, Luis Enrique, The New Swing Sextet and as always, local favorite Johnny Polanco y su Conjunto Amistad. Thousands of salsa dancers and aficionados will be taking over the ballrooms of the Westin Bonaventure Hotel for four days and nights totally immersed into everything salsa. Dance exhibitions, workshops, social salsa dancing to international and national DJs, the popular Bachata Room, and nightly mega-dance parties with some of the best salsa bands in the world, all indicate the Los Angeles Salsa Congress is back in town. For tickets, reservations and more information, visit www.mysalsacongress.com and/or www.atevents.com.

The Salsa Musicians Seminar 2012 is a four-day intensive individual and group instruction that aims to provide students participating with the training and tools necessary to play and perform as part of a salsa band. Directed by Grammy winning pianist, arranger, and producer Oscar Hernandez (leader of the Spanish Harlem Orchestra), this seminar will include many other renowned Latin musicians. Instruments to be covered include piano, bass, conga, timbal, bongo, trumpet, saxophone, flute, trombone, and vocals. Basic music knowledge is required to participate in the seminar. For more information and registration, visit www.salsaseminar.oscarhernandezmusic.com/losangeles-salsa-seminar/.

The Annual Dia de San Juan Festival is scheduled for June 17 at the Queen Mary Events Park in Long Beach, California. Headliners include (directly from Puerto Rico) the group NG2, and singer Choco Orta. Representing Los Angeles will be the groups Tabaco y Ron and La Bomba Mix, plus Super DJ Robby and MC Paloma.

Other happenings around town: Salsa singing sensation Victor Manuelle performs at The Conga Room April 1st in L.A. Live (Downtown Los Angeles).

Steven's Steak House in the city of Commerce presents the Los Angeles All Star Salsa Band on April 1ST featuring Susie Hansen, Angel Lebron, Chino Espinoza, Johnny Polanco, Hector Rivera, and Angel Hernandez, among others, for an amazing salsa jam session.

**Windows Media
Quicktime**

The Estrada Brothers

Mr. Ray

**Windows Media
Quicktime**

Manny Silvera

Based in America

**Windows Media
Quicktime**

Direct from Cuba, La Charanga Habanera will be taking the stage of The Conga Room on April 5th.

Also from Cuba, the legendary group Sierra Maestra will be performing at the Skirball Cultural Center on April 5th.

Legendary salsa singer Jose Alberto "El Canario" performs at The Conga Room on April 12th.

The Contra-Tiempo 7th Annual Charity Gala is scheduled for April 13th at La Fonda Supper Club on Wilshire Blvd. in Los Angeles. Headlining the event will be Bobby Matos & his Afro Latin Jazz Ensemble. For tickets and reservations, visit www.contrtiempo.secure.force.com/ticket#sections.

The Susie Hansen Latin Band will play for the LA Harbor Latin Association on May 5th at the Croatian Cultural Center in San Pedro. For tickets and more information, call (310) 514-3791.

Orquesta Tabaco y Ron headlines the "Annual Mother's Day Salsa Dance" on May 12th at the VFW Post 8620 in West Covina.

Support all your local artists, musicians and venues. Live music rules! Peace.

**A BITE FROM THE APPLE****By Vicki Solá**

Chuti Serrano's recording debut, "Ritmo, Sabor y Melodía," is finally out.





"When I decided to go solo, I never imagined how difficult it was going to be," says Serrano, formerly featured as Conjunto Imagen's vocalist for eleven years. "Financing such a project can well take you into the thousands of dollars. Maintaining a family and steady job is no easy task. Although the technology has changed and you can now build a home recording studio with just a computer and a program, a production still needs to be mixed, mastered, and sent out for duplication. Many obstacles can prevent someone from completing such a project. But I have to say, if anyone is passionate enough about the music, then the attempt has to be made in order to succeed."

Born in Arecibo, Puerto Rico, Serrano grew up in "Salsa City" (Paterson, New Jersey), experiencing weekly "rumbones" at the East-Side and Roberto Clemente parks where such participants as Frankie Ruiz, Domingo Quiñones, and Nelson "Aceite" Román became well-known.

Serrano began playing congas at age ten, and six years later, he was already performing with Max Hernández's orchestra before joining Orquesta Tabú, Orquesta Mayoral, Conjunto Guayacán and Félix Ortíz y su Sexteto Tropical. "While I had a passion for percussion," recalls Serrano, "I always had something to do with the writing and creation of some of their songs."

When an accident affecting his right arm made it impossible for Serrano to play percussion anymore, he honed his vocal and writing skills and joined Charlie López's orchestra, coming on board a couple years later with Conjunto Imagen, with whom he penned "Huracán de Amor," "No Puedo Más," "Cómo Quisiera," "Encuentro Especial," "Rumores," "Confusión," "Bachata," and "Qué Tiene Esa Mujer."

Serrano left Conjunto Imagen in 2008 and began work on the nine original compositions that comprise his new CD. ("Did I Tell You I Love You?" was co-written by Joey Hernández.) Serrano credits his JAM Records partner, José Tabares (whom he describes as "one of the best bass players of this era") for his vital assistance.

"I tried," states Serrano, "to maintain the hardcore salsa with a balance of good rhythms for the dancers and meaningful stories for the listeners." In this humble writer's opinion, he has succeeded.





More laser luster... Born in Carolina, Puerto Rico, vocalist Orlando Ortíz migrated to the South Bronx, settling near the famed Teatro Puerto Rico, a major concert venue for many top Latin musicians. The musical inspiration stayed with him as he moved back to Carolina, where he spent time with his friend Richie — the son of Cheo Feliciano. José Nogueras and El Gran Combo's Edgardo Morales also happened to be his neighbors.

After a move to Texas, Ortíz — also known as a member of the 2009 Grammy-nominated New Swing Sextet- settled in the East Coast's tri-state area and formed the salsa band Karibe Mambo, whose new self-titled recording (Orlando Ortíz & Karibe Mambo) features musical director and percussionist Marcos "Kilo" Torres, guitarist Marcos Torres, Sr., pianist Nataniel Molina, bassist Danny Torres, percussionist Marcos López, percussionist Nelson "Panchito" Bello, flutist Kalani Trinidad, and trombonists José "Bimbo" Cruz and José Maunez. Congrats to all!

Arsenio Rodríguez finally gets a tombstone. **Larry Harlow**, a disciple of "El Ciego Maravilloso," presented a check to Ferncliff Cemetery, making it possible. We look forward to the ceremony and festivities.





Aurora & Zon del Barrio added a horn last December, traveling with Afro-Cuban legend Alfredo "Chocolate" Armenteros to Martinique and Guadeloupe. "Despite the fact that there was a free jazz festival that weekend (featuring Kenny Hargrove and Omar Sosa) and soaring ticket sales of 55 Euros a piece," says bandleader Aurora Flores, "our concert with Chocolate was nearly sold out — a real testament to his strong star power."

Zon del Barrio is working on its next production, "Locked and Reloaded," which is expected to be released before the summer of 2012. "Meanwhile," says Flores, "if you need to get into the Barrio Zone, we'll be performing alongside vocalist Ismael Miranda at the Staten Island Hilton Garden Inn on April 7th—a Sabado de Gloria (Easter Saturday) Dance."

DJ Jeff's "Hot Pick of the Month": Michael Stuart's "Estar Enamorado."

Around town... The Mambo Legends perform at the West Gate Lounge (April 7th)... The Bronx club called Side Street presents Tito Nieves (April 14th) and celebrates its 31st anniversary (April 28th) with Ray de la Paz and The Boricua Legends.... Jimmy Sabater, Jr., headlines "A Tribute to the Legendary Jimmy Sabater" (featuring vocalist Sammy González, Jr., and as special guest, Son Boricua's José Mangual, Jr.), at Astoria's Club Mijana (April 15th).... On the roster of "Latin jazz Wednesdays" at New Rochelle's "Don Coquí's": Steve Pouchie and his Latin Jazz Ensemble, Orlando Marín, Willie Rodríguez's Latin Jazz Group, and Carlos Jiménez & Mambo Dulcet. Slated at the same venue for "Salsa Thursdays": Grupo Latin Vibe, Típica '73, Pete Nater & Associates, and Alfredo de la Fé.... On April 29th, Orquesta Afinke is the scheduled "Latin Sundays" band at The Whiskey Café (where vocalist Letty Sandoval recently rocked the house), located in Lyndhurst, New Jersey.

¡Hasta la próxima!



LATIN BEAT UPDATE

By **Nelson Rodríguez**

With the disappearance of major record labels and the lack of support from commercial radio, non-commercial shows produced by radio DJs are the only viable outlets for today's salsa and Latin jazz artists. Latin Beat Magazine supports these DJs and therefore, encourages the salsa and Latin jazz artists to send their CDs to the only people willing and able to play it.

A legendary Brazilian jazz artist that has gained much fame as a harmonica virtuoso is **Hendrik Meurkens**, who also plays a mean vibraphone and was introduced to the world by the Concord Records label. He is regarded by many harmonica aficionados as the next biggest name after the great Toots Thielemans. Zoho Music just released two awesome albums headlined by this masterful multi-instrumentalist: "Live at Bird's Eyes" (a swinging combination of jazz, bossa nova, samba, and chorinho) and his Brazilian jazz collaboration with bassist Gabriel Espinoza ("Celebrando").

There are two other wonderful Brazilian jazz releases, respectively recorded by the **Jovino Santos Neto Quintet** ("Corrente") and **Mario Adnet** ("More Jobim Jazz"). Celebrating its 38th year on the airwaves, Alma del Radio presents every Saturday and Sunday, from 9 a.m. to 10 P.M. (PST), one of the world's best Brazilian radio programs, hosted by Sergio Mienenchenko. Check it out to learn about this wonderful and sensual music.





One of my favorite mainstream jazz/Latin jazz bassists is **John Benítez**, who shines on the CD "Purpose," comprised mostly of original tunes that reflect the things that have inspired him. Original standouts include "Purpose", "Rumba", "Bomba Lírica", and "Yagrumo", along with Manuel Valera's "The Return".

Carlos Oliva & Los Sobrinos del Juez have a long, rich history in Miami, where they pioneered, back in their early years, what became known as the "Miami sound." While they might not record as often today, their last few releases have been truly exceptional. Their latest project is titled "Y Seguimos Guarachando". This CD/DVD combo contains the track "El Pescao", "Castígame", "Las Gotas de Sudor", "Por Ti", "Take It Easy", "Pánfilo" and "El Diluvio Universal".

Las Vegas is the homebase of percussionist **Marlon López y su Sonora Star Internacional**, whose CD "Recuerdos de La Salsa" consists mostly of Oscar D'León and Joe Arroyo covers.

Puerto Rico says 'presente' with **Peter Vega & Mayagüez Big Band**, whose CD "El Legado" offers a mix of thirteen vocalists and composers from the city of Mayagüez. Salsa DJs and dancers will love "Hace Rato", "Ahora Vengo Yo", "De Mayagüez", and "Me Hace Falta".

One of the best CDs of 2012 comes from Barcelona, Spain. I'm referring to Bloque 53's "Tumba Puchunga (Y Los Trombones de Tromboranga)". This vibe-oriented quintet features trombonists Vladimir Peña & Tom Jhonson. I enjoyed listening to the following tracks: "Cógelo Ahí", "Bravo Rumbero", "Viajando", "El Hijo del Sonero", "Me Alborotas", "Conciencia", "Tumba Puchunga", "Envidia", and "El Muñeco de La Ciudad".

Puerto Rican vocalist **Yesenia Cruz** has been making a name for herself on the island with her folkloric recordings, including her latest self-titled CD ("Yolanda Cruz"). Just listen to the songs "Soy La Canción Campesina", "Tú y Tu Poesía", "Desde mi Estancia de Flores", and "Jardín de Nuestro Planeta", all written by Miguel Santiago. You won't be disappointed.

More than ever before buyers need to be aware of true contents of any CDs they intend to purchase and specifically those titled "Best Of" or "Greatest Hits" and extracted from recordings of the 1960s and 1970s. Keep in mind that many of these recordings released by smaller labels have no access to the masters required to create satisfactory compilations. Therefore, the sound quality is very poor.



DESDE BORINQUEN

Por: Elmer González

Fotos por Miguel Rojas

RECONOCIMIENTO A MONCHITO MUÑOZ. El domingo 22 de enero un grupo de músicos, de familiares y amigos celebraron un reconocimiento al percusionista puertorriqueño Ramón "Monchito" Muñoz Rodríguez en un club de jazz en San Juan.



En un ambiente de alegría, camaradería y mucha música, Monchito dirigió la legendaria orquesta de Rafael Muñoz, su padre, la cual interpretó boleros que fueron famosos en la década de 1940 y varias descargas y mambos del repertorio de Tito Rodríguez y Tito Puente.



Participaron de la actividad otras figuras musicales como el Jimmy Rivera Jazz Trio, el grupo Ibabali Bámbula Beat bajo la dirección de Raúl Berríos, Ana Baiana, Pijuán, Eladio Pérez y otros.

Monchito, quien se destacó siempre como timbalero, formó parte de varias orquestas grandes del Nueva York Latino en la década de 1950. Junto a Uba Nieto, Tito Puente, Papi Pagani y otros, fue una de las figuras que influyó en la formación musical de percusionistas que se destacaron luego con el movimiento de la salsa a partir de la década de 1960.

Nació en San Juan el 6 de junio de 1932 y desde joven se trasladó a Nueva York. Grabó por primera vez como bongosero poco antes de cumplir los 15 años con la orquesta del baterista Gene Krupa, uno de sus ídolos. Su bongó se escucha en el tema "Chiquita Banana" grabado en Nueva York el 6 de mayo de 1946.

Luego se destacó como timbalero con orquestas como la de Noro Morales, José Curbelo y Tito Rodríguez. Figura además como bongosero en el famoso disco "Dance Mania" (1958) de Tito Puente en cuyos créditos aparece con el nombre de Ray Rodríguez.

Fue realmente un placer ver el rostro de alegría y percibir la satisfacción de Monchito esa tarde en San Juan rodeado de sus tres grandes amores: la familia, la música y sus amigos.

EL PUERTO RICO JAZZ JAM. El trompetista Humberto Ramírez presentó la tercera edición de su Puerto Rico Jazz Jam Festival en el Teatro Tapia del Viejo San Juan los días 27 y 28 de enero.



Ramírez, quien por esos días presentaba también su producción discográfica número 21, contó con la participación de cuatro agrupaciones puertorriqueñas.



La primera velada estuvo a cargo del grupo "Del Sur al Norte" del trompetista Julito Alvarado quien se lució con ritmos de mambos, baladas y sones en el contexto del jazz latino.



William Cepeda deleitó a todos con sus traducciones al lenguaje del jazz de la bomba y la plena boricuas.



En la segunda velada sobresalió el grupo del pianista Ángel David Mattos y sus fusiones de la danza puertorriqueña y el jazz para luego dar paso a un final explosivo con el cuarteto de Humberto Ramírez y Giovanni Hidalgo.



EL PUERTO RICO HEINEKEN JAZZ FEST 2012 se estará celebrando este año durante el fin de semana del 29 de marzo al 1 de abril. Esta vez se le dedica al bajista mexicano Abraham Laboriel.



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