

## MAY 2010 ISSUE

# Columns ⊕ ⊕ ⊕

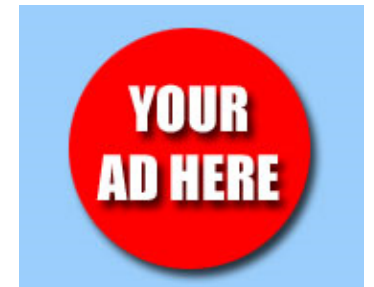
## QUÉ PASA IN LA

By Rudy Mangual

Our current issue, Latin Beat Magazine salutes all the female bandleaders, musicians, vocalists, DJs, dance instructors, and music industry professionals that keep Latin music alive and ongoing in our city.

**The 8th Annual "Mi Son Cubano" Festival** will be held on Sunday, May 2nd, at the Frank G. Bonelli Park in San Dimas, featuring salsa singer **Rey Ruiz and his Orchestra**. For tickets and more information, call (714) 522-6208 or visit [www.habanapromotions.com](http://www.habanapromotions.com).

Cinco de Mayo celebrations around town include The **Conga Room's Cinco de Mayo Festival** at the Nokia Plaza in LA Live, as well as in the Conga Room nightclub, on May 5th, with performances by **Sheila E and the E Family, Mariachi Guadalajara, and Poncho Sánchez and his Latin Jazz**



**Steve Pouchie**  
Watch Ur Wallet  
[Windows Media Quicktime](#)

**José Luis Morán**  
La Rumba del Barrio

[Windows Media Quicktime](#)

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

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**Somos Son**  
Bilongo  
[Windows Media Quicktime](#)

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**The Estrada Brothers**  
Mr. Ray  
[Windows Media Quicktime](#)

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**Manny Silvera**  
Bassed in America  
[Windows Media Quicktime](#)

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**Bobby Matos**  
Cuchy Frito Man  
[Windows Media Quicktime](#)

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**Chembo Corniel**  
Buena Gente  
[Windows Media Quicktime](#)

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**Maña**  
Tranquilito  
[Windows Media Quicktime](#)

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**Santiago Ceron**  
Besos de Hada  
[Windows Media](#)

**Band.**

Percussionist/bandleader **Louie Cruz Beltrán** will be performing at Vitello's in Studio City, on May 5th.

Singer **Yamila** will be performing at Café Monsoon in Santa Mónica (3rd Street Promenade), on May 5th.

**Phil Robinson & Sonora Borinqueña** will be featured at Café Sevilla in Riverside, on May 5th.

**Los Titos** perform every Thursday night at Ortega 120, in Redondo Beach. This unique duo — featuring Alberto Mirabal (guitar and vocals) and Rudy Mangual (percussion) — delivers a well-balanced repertoire of Latin American classics and contemporary compositions, as well as popular hits performed in a relaxed bohemian setting.

Cuban singer/songwriter **Carlos Varela** will be in town on May 6th for a special performance at the Echoplex, in the Echo Park area of Los Angeles.

The Conga Room celebrates rock en español with performances by **Kinky** (May 6th), **Jumbo** (May 12th), **Inspector** (June 3rd), and **Sussie 4** (June 9th).

The American Legion's Borinquen Post 508 will be hosting its **Annual Mother's Day Salsa Dance** on Saturday, May 8th, at the American Legion Post 790 in West Covina. Headlining the event will be **Johnny Polanco y su Conjunto Amistad** and DJ Papo "El Salsero" Rodríguez. For tickets and more information, call (909) 633-9812 or visit [www.dimelolife.com](http://www.dimelolife.com).

**Los Hermanos Flores** are scheduled to perform at the Jaltepec Restaurant in Canoga Park, on May 9th.

The **Susie Hansen Latin Jazz Band** will appear at the Center Stage Theatre in Fontana, on May 13th.

The **"Presencia Cubana en Los Angeles"** Festival will be held on May 23rd, at Los Angeles' Echo Park. This is a family event free of charge.

The **Annual L.A. Salsa Congress** will be held from May 27th to May 30th, 2010 at the Radisson Hotel-LAX. Musical headliners this year's include **Johnny Polanco y su Conjunto Amistad** (Thursday, May 27th), **Ismael Miranda with Oscar Hernández and The L.A. Salsa All-Stars** (Friday, May 28th), **Angel Meléndez and The 911 Orchestra** (Saturday, May 29th), and **Orquesta Costazul** (Sunday, May 30th). For tickets and more information, visit <http://www.alberttorreevents.com>.

This year's annual **"Día de San Juan"** Festival will take place on June 6th, at the Frank G.

## [Quicktime](#)

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### **Johnny Polanco y Su Conjunto Amistad**

El Gusto de Mi Salsa

[Windows Media](#)

[Quicktime](#)

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### **Siempre Salsa All Stars**

Salsa Para Siempre

[Windows Media](#)

[Quicktime](#)

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Bonelli Park, in the city of San Dimas. Headlining the event will be the legendary **El Gran Combo** from Puerto Rico.

The **32nd Annual Playboy Jazz Festival** is scheduled for June 12th and 13th at the landmark Hollywood Bowl. This year's festival will feature **Los Van Van** (imported directly from Cuba) and the Miami-based group **Tiempo Libre**, among many others.

Support your local artists and their venues. Peace.



## **A BITE FROM THE APPLE**

By **Vicki Solá**

Another musical icon has left us. On Wednesday, April 7th, at 7:58 a.m., Graciela Pérez-Gutierrez, known simply as Graciela, died in Manhattan, at age 94.

Born in Havana, Cuba on August 23rd, 1915, she began her seventy-seven year career at age 17, singing with the all-female group Orquesta Anacaona. In New York, her brother Frank Grillo "Machito" and his brother-in-law Mario Bauzá formed Machito and the Afro-Cubans, which became the preeminent Latin orchestra of the day, and set the standard for all other Latin bands to come. When in 1943 Machito was drafted into the U.S. Army, Bauzá sent for Graciela. Known for her inimitable vocal stylings on classics *Noche de Ronda*, *Que Me Falta*, *Ay José*, *Novio Mio*, *Vive Como Yo*, and *Sí, Sí, No, No*, she performed with, and traveled the world with the orchestra for 32 years, until she joined Bauzá's band in 1975.

Graciela received International Latin Music Hall of Fame awards in 1999 and 2001, a Latin Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award in 2007, and recognition from the United States government for entertaining troops during World War II. During her 93rd birthday celebration, held at Lincoln Center's Out of Doors Festival, she sang five songs, for ten thousand fans.

I consider myself fortunate to have watched Graciela rehearse at Mario Bauzá's apartment back in the late 1980s. I extend my deepest condolences to her family, friends and associates.

Vibraphonist **Steve Pouchie** has released *El Puente (The Bridge)*, a Latin Jazz CD featuring Little Johnny Rivero, Andrea Brachfeld, Pete Nater, Jotan Afanador, and Iván Renta.

"I guess," says Pouchie, who also produces cable program "Latin Jazz Alive and Kickin'," "my first goal with this recording was to present a collection of songs and



arrangements that would be reflective of both 'old school' Latin Jazz-music that prompts you to dance as well as listen-and some original songs that are new, catchy, and memorable.



Overall, my other main goal was to create an album that would be a hit for Latin Jazz vibes lovers — both East coast and West coast."

The New York-born Puerto Rican's vibraphone style has been compared to both Cal Tjader's — Max Salazar has dubbed him the "Puerto Rican Cal Tjader" — and to Tito Puente's.

Seven of the CDs tracks were composed by Pouchie, who collaborated on arrangements with both Willie Ruiz and Adan Pérez, in addition to arranging on his own. Andrea Brachfeld and Ariel Santiago contributed flute solos, and Ronnie Puente, Tito Puente's eldest son, solos on marimba on *Picadillo*.

*El Puente* is, in my opinion, a brilliant, masterful musical offering, and belongs in collections of dancers and Latin jazz lovers alike.

**More laser luster...** Jesús Pagán's *Salsa de la Mata-From the Roots* is one of those productions I consider perfect — true "salsa dura," no filler whatsoever! Says leader/lead vocalist Pagan, "I wanted to make something that sounded more traditional, but with new lyrics and aggressive arrangements."

This effort, "a tribute," says Pagan, "to the great masters of our music, and dedicated to the dancers," has earned him the Paoli Award, in Orlando, Florida, for "Best Tropical Salsa Interpreter," and features real heavyweights — Lucho Cueto (piano), Héctor "Máximo" Rodríguez (bass), Eddie Montalvo (congas) Jorge González (bongo), Luisito Quintero (timbal), Richie Viruet (trumpet), Joe Fiedler (trombone), and Carl Corwin (baritone sax).

The multi-talented Pagan has also penned Jayko y Su Komboloko's title track, *Dime Lo Que Quieres*, sung by Ray de la Paz.

**From Philly to New York...** Orquesta La Paz's *Deja Vu*, a real swinger, highly recommended by yours truly, features special guest vocalist, Ray Viera. Check out the track *Esa Mujer*, and Suzzette Ortiz's piano solo on *Con Alma, Vida y Corazón*.

**DJ Jeff's "Hot Pick of the Month": Cubanason's Cubanizate.**

**Around town... A "Charan-Mambo" Mother's Day** celebration takes place May 8th at Sidestreet, in the Bronx, featuring Frankie Morales and his Mambo of the Times Orchestra and Pito Castillo's CharanSalsa. Alfredo de la Fé and vocalist Yoko are slated to perform as special guests with Morales' band. Yoko will sing the popular Celia Cruz hit Cucala.

**The Mambo Legends** (featuring former members of the Tito Puente Orchestra), Cubanason,



and Rey Ruiz are on the West Gate Lounge's May roster. Junior Vega y Ritmos Sabroso's 2 a.m. shows there have proven quite popular-they take place every Saturday...

**Jimmy Delgado & Taller Boricua's Wednesday Night "After Works"** at Julia De Burgos present the Mambo Legends, featuring Frankie Vásquez and Cita Rodríguez (May 5th), Manny Oquendo's Libre (kept alive by co-founder Andy González) (May 12th), Orchestra Broadway (May 19th), and the Héctor Lavoe All Stars Band, with Renzo Padilla, José Mangual, Jr., Professor Joe Torres, Reynaldo Jorge, and Danny Rosado (May 26th).

A heads up: Direct from Cuba, **Juan Formell y Los Van Van** play SOB's on June 6th. ¡Hasta la próxima!



## LB MUSIC UPDATE

By **Nelson Rodríguez**

Latin Jazz took a back seat in 2009 to salsa in terms of the total number of projects appearing in the market place, but Latin jazz releases were far superior in terms of content and vision. So far, during the first quarter of 2010, we have heard some amazing Latin jazz recordings and many more are due to be released prior to the summer season.

**Bobby Carcassés (pictured above)** has made an illustrious career by singing jazz (particularly scat) and playing the flugelhorn. He belongs to a rare breed, in terms of his musical accomplishments during his 50-year career. In fact, he recently released his wonderful 50th anniversary CD *De La Habana a Nueva York*, backed by a superb cast – Dafnis Prieto, Yosvany Terry, Osmany Paredes, Marvin Diz, Yuniory Terry, Andrea Brachfeld, etc. They are collectively known as Afrojazz, the same name Carcassés used in 1989 when he originally recorded the tracks *Blues Guaguancó* and *Blues Para Chano*.



From the SF Bay Area comes drummer Paul van Wageningen, a West coast legend who has been on everyone's A-List for decades and has finally made his bandleading debut, in conjunction with his brother, bassist Marc van Wageningen. The VM Brothers' CD *Muziek* is a showcase for their talent that offers another view of how Latin jazz has evolved. Add awesome

musicians like Wayne Wallace, Sheila E., Michael Spiro, Ray Obiedo. Dave K. Mathews, Peter Michael Escovedo and others to the loop, and you have another winner in the field for 2010.

**Darwin Noguera**, a promising Nicaraguan pianist based in Chicago, leads the Evolution Quintet (also composed of Víctor García, Daniel Pastor, Joshua Ramos and Greg Ward), whose CD "The Gardener" is sensational jazz recording.

Latin jazz comes in many forms and from all corners of the world. The German ensemble of **Muriel Anderson & Tierra Negra** unites the musical forces of guitarist Muriel Anderson with the duo of Raughi Ebert & Leo Henrichs to create flamenco heaven on their CD *New World Flamenco*.

**Alex Díaz & Son de la Calle** pay homage to the father of merengue-jazz, Mario Rivera, who played on their CD *Son de la Calle*, recorded in three parts (1990, 2008, and 2009). Mario Rivera recorded on the 1990 and 2008 tracks (with Miguel Zenón replacing him in 2009). Percussionist Díaz's previous CD, *The Be Bop Boogaloo Kings* – also devoted to merengue-jazz – was released in 2006.

Proving again that Latin jazz has endless boundaries, the Austrian pianist **Hamlet Fiorilli** and his band (Hamlet & His Latin Jazz Experience) present the CD *Descarumbiando*. This one truly blew me away, as I listened to the chemistry and artistry displayed by each of the musicians through the repertoire of Fiorilli originals.

**The Curtis Brothers Quartet's** debut CD "Blood-Spirit-Land-Water-Freedom" is just another fine example of how the Latin jazz genre can be approached in a refreshing manner, while delivering a different perspective. Pianist Zaccai Curtis is the blood of the quartet, with his brother Luques functioning as the group's spirit, drummer Richie Barshay as the land and conguero Reinaldo de Jesús as the water, via an emotional journey that encompasses many idioms.

Conguero **Samuel Torres'** second release, *Yaounde*, inspired by the emotional memories of his 2005 trip to Cameroon, as portrayed with the help of a fine ensemble of musicians, including the likes of Manuel Valera, Ralph Irizarry, Anat Cohen, Sofia Rei Koutsovitis, Michael Rodríguez, John Benítez and Ernesto Simpson.

**Más Bajo** is a salsa band whose members hail from France, Cuba and Chile. They were basically doing covers for ten years, up until 2007, when Cuban vocalist Raúl Hernández joined the band as its lead singer. Más Bajo's French salsa (with the taste of Cuba) is showcased on the CD "Pancho Illegal".

From Barcelona, Spain, comes **Bloque 53**, a group led by percussionist Joaquin Arteaga that offers hardcore salsa and Latin jazz, along with some fine vocal work delivered by Enso Verdú, Ernesto Paz, Diana Feria and Lenin Jiménez.

Based in the S.F. Bay Area, **Tito González y su Son de Cuba** demonstrate the richness of traditional Cuban son, combined with today's flavors, on the CD *Al Doblar la Esquina*, which was recorded in Cuba by González, an instructor in the San Francisco Bay Area who plays an extraordinary tres guitar.

**Orquesta Salsaborysón**, led by flautist Alberto González, comes straight from Venezuela with the CD *Montuno a Barretto*, dedicated to the great conguero Ray Barretto. It includes a variety of Barreto's classic hits: Margie, Indestructible, *Quítate la Máscara*, *Vive y Vacila*, *Guararé* and many more. This one has been receiving huge worldwide coverage.

The bachata genre has had a long and rich history that I first recall with Víctor Víctor and Juan Luis Guerra, but the founding fathers, in my opinion, were Luis Segarra (one of the first pioneers), Anthony Santos, Frank Reyes, Bienvenido Rodríguez, Joe Vera and a few others that gave it that 'old school' feel. Today, the younger generation knows bachata through the commercial success of Aventura, Andy Andy, Monchy & Alexandra, etc, but there is a legion of other deserving acts that do not get the same mass exposure. One of the new deserving bands is **4ever** with their CD *Sex-Future-No Limits*, and the sensational hit *Más Que un Amigo*.

From Miami comes the funky Afro-Cuban sounds of **Palo**, featuring the lead vocals of Leslie Cartaya and Philbert Armenteros, along with tenor saxophonist Ed Calle, timbalero Raymer Olalde and bandleader/pianist Steve Roitstein. The CD *This is Afro-Cuban Funk* is another perfect example of the abundance of styles that can be incorporated into our musical culture.



## DESDE BORINQUEN

Por Elmer González

Fotos @Julio Costoso

**EL DÍA NACIONAL DE LA SALSA.** Se trata de un ritual que comenzó hace 27 años. Miles de salseros apasionados se reúnen para bailar y festejar con los artistas que han marcado la trayectoria de esta forma de música. Es un culto a la clave, al guajeo, al vacilón y al baile. Es un acto de reafirmación cultural que los boricuas comparten con visitantes de



otras latitudes. Así quedó demostrado, una vez más, el 21 de marzo con el gran concierto que presentó la radioemisora Z93 en el Estadio Hiram Bithorn en San Juan.

Las festividades del año actual fueron dedicadas al compositor Johnny Ortiz, al empresario y promotor artístico Héctor Maisonave y a Ángel "Paleco" Córdova (el "band boy" del Gran Combo). El maratónico concierto se extendió durante nueve horas, a partir de la 1:00 P.M. La música comenzó con la orquesta Del Sur al Norte dirigida por el trompetista Julito Alvarado. Fue una apertura llena de energía y gratos sonidos que entusiasmó a los bailadores. La orquesta de Don Perigñón desplegó su elegancia sonora, repleta de afinque y de swing salsero. El Gran Combo encendió la tarima con su oferta habitual y revalidó una vez más, la predilección que goza entre los bailadores. Allí fue donde "los mulatos del sabor" estrenaron el tema "Sin salsa no hay paraíso", el cual sirve de título a su nueva producción discográfica.

La nostalgia ocupó su lugar a través de la presentación de Corporación Latina y La Zodiac, dos agrupaciones que fueron bastante





populares entre los jóvenes salseros de la década de los setenta.

Las composiciones de Johnny Ortiz fueron los ingredientes del plato fuerte elaborado por la Orquesta Del Día Nacional (bajo la dirección de Louis García) que acompañó a los cantantes Pedro Brull, Ray de la Paz, Gilberto Santa Rosa, Yolanda Rivera y Luisito Carrión. Santa Rosa desplegó la propuesta vocal más destacada debido a la calidad de su improvisado fraseo.

Se escucharon temas como "Lluvia de tu cielo", "No se compara", "Prefiero ser rumbero", "Catalina La O", "La raza latina" y "Mi negrita", entre otros. La velada finalizó con el cantante Luis Enrique interpretando su éxito "Yo no sé mañana".

Con cada edición de este concierto aumenta la lista de los nombres mencionados de artistas salseros ya desaparecidos. La emisora Z93 pone énfasis en una rotación musical de "oldies" dentro de un reciclaje continuo de "salsa vieja" que no le permite a los oyentes conocer a orquestas y artistas que cultivan la salsa en otros países. El oyente promedio no conoce más allá de lo que se ha hecho en Borinquen y en Nueva York.



Creo que la salsa en Puerto Rico debe oxigenarse y conectarse con el resto del mundo. Ya la salsa no es



una cosa exclusiva de esta isla. El concierto del Día Nacional de la Salsa debería convertirse en un evento internacional al que puedan concurrir orquestas norteamericanas, tales como La Excelencia y Johnny Polanco & Conjunto Amistad, así como una cantera de buenas agrupaciones provenientes de Venezuela y Colombia (El grupo caraqueño Bailatino, por ejemplo, podría causar gran sensación). Y en lo que se refiere a Puerto Rico, ya es hora de darle una oportunidad a Truco y Zaperoko, una agrupación renombrada por su combinación de la rumba y la plena. Es hora de abrirnos al mundo, antes de que se nos agoten todos los "maestros" que dedicaron sus vidas al género salsero en años pretéritos.



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