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## Columns

MAY 2012 ISSUE

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### QUÉ PASA IN LA

By Rudy Mangua

Blessed with some of the best weather on our blue planet, Southern California starts its summer season in May with festivities associated with the popular “Cinco de Mayo” theme. Numerous restaurants, nightclubs, civic centers, schools and social organizations celebrate this special day, which commemorates the Mexican army’s victory (under the leadership of General Ignacio Zaragoza Seguín) over French forces at the Battle of Puebla on May 5, 1862. Steven’s Steak & Seafood House, located in the City of Commerce, will be hosting Fania legend **Adalberto Santiago** on its “Cinco de Mayo Party.”

**Dr. Bobby Rodríguez** presents **Los Angeles Latin Jazz All-Stars** (Justo Almario, Arturo Velasco, Joe Rotondi, Eddie Resto, Nacho Ontiveros, Munyungo Jackson, Luis Conte, and Bobby Matos), along with **Kotolán**, **Grupo Folklórico de UCLA**, and the **UCLA Latin Jazz Big Band**, at UCLA’s Schoenberg Hall, located in the City of Los Angeles, on May 5.

Local favorite **Susie Hansen’s Latin Band** will be playing a double-hitter on the same Mexican holiday, performing at the Temecula Duck Pond (in the city of Temecula) at 1:00 P.M., and at San Pedro’s Croatian Cultural Center at 7:00 P.M.

A Mother’s Day celebration will be conducted on Saturday, May 12 at West Covina’s VFW Post 8620, featuring the sounds of **Orquesta Tabaco y Rón**, plus DJ Willie Bracero.

**Albert Torres Productions** presents “**The 14th Annual Los Angeles Salsa Congress and Bachata Room**” from May 24 to May 27, when the Westin Bonaventure Hotel in Downtown Los Angeles becomes the salsa epicenter of the world, expecting over 10,000 dancers from over 35 countries throughout the weekend. The downtown pre-congress party takes place at The Conga Room/L.A. Live on Thursday, May 24, featuring **Johnny Polanco & Conjunto Amistad**, with



#### Bloque 53

Cogelo Ahi

Windows Media

Quicktime

#### Chico Álvarez

El Indio Caonabo

Windows Media

Quicktime

#### Bio Ritmo

La Muralla

## Streaming Music

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### Louie Cruz Beltran

Paint the Rhythm  
**Windows Media**  
**Quicktime**

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### Cintron Band Live

Human Nature  
**Windows Media**  
**Quicktime**

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### Vanelis

Como Lo Extraño  
**Windows Media**  
**Quicktime**

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### Nayibe

Borinquen  
**Windows Media**  
**Quicktime**

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### Luis González

Spain  
**Windows Media**  
**Quicktime**

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### Rolando Sanchez

Vamonos De Fiesta  
**Windows Media**  
**Quicktime**

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### Steve Pouchie

Watch Ur Wallet  
**Windows Media**  
**Quicktime**

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### Somos Son

Bilongo

special guests. Headliners at the Westin Bonaventure Hotel's ballrooms will include the orchestras led by **Oscar D'León** (on Friday, May 25) and **Luis Enrique** (on Saturday, May 26), plus the **New Swing Sextet** (with special guest **Alfredo de la Fé**) on Sunday, May 27. For advance dance concert tickets, salsa congress tickets, and hotel reservations, call (310) 445-9705, or visit [www.mysalsacongress.com](http://www.mysalsacongress.com) or [atevents@gmail.com](mailto:atevents@gmail.com).

The **2012 Ford Amphitheatre Summer Season's** schedule of events has been announced, and some of this season's highlights include the "Fiesta Jarocho-Conjunto Jardín's 15th Anniversary Concert" on June 2; "Beat the Drum" (on July 15), featuring East LA Taiko (Latin-Afro-Cuban-Japanese taiko), Cava (taiko and cajón) and Atabey (Puerto Rican bomba), among others. "Son of the Drum", to be conducted on July 27, layers the Cuban sounds of the batá, conga and cajón with modern effects created by samplers and turntables.

Los Angeles' own **Charanga Cubana** takes the stage of the Ford Amphitheatre on August 11. The Grammy-nominated Cuban ensemble epitomizes the charanga format that defined and/or influenced many Cuban genres, from danzón to mambo to chachachá...

"Tangos and Huaynos" (August 18) pairs the fiery Argentine tango with the joy of indigenous Peruvian music and dance... "The Fourth Annual LAVida Music Festival" (September 2) headlines percussionist **Louie Cruz Beltrán's** 12-piece Latin jazz Ensemble, plus many special guests. The Ford Amphitheatre is an intimate 1,200-seat, outdoor venue located in Hollywood. For more information, visit [www.FordTheatres.org](http://www.FordTheatres.org)



**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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The 17th Annual Día de San Juan Festival is scheduled for Father's Day (Sunday, June 17th), at the Queen Mary Events Park in Long Beach. This year's festival showcases a couple of salsa acts imported directly from Puerto Rico: the group **NG 2**, and **Choco Orta (pictured above)**. Local favorites include **Orquesta Tabaco y Ron**, **La Bomba Mix**, **Super DJ Robby**, and **MC Paloma**. For tickets and more information, visit [www.fiestalegre.net](http://www.fiestalegre.net)

Brazilian superstar **Roberto Carlos** brings his "Un Millón de Amigos" Tour to the Nokia Theatre at LA Live (in Downtown L.A.) on Saturday, June 16, 2012. Visit [www.aeglive.com](http://www.aeglive.com) for tickets and more events.

Continue supporting all your local artists and their venues. Peace!



## A BITE FROM THE APPLE

By Vicki Solá







**The Boricua Legends'** new CD, "Cadencia, Ricura y Sabor" is, in this writer's humble opinion, one monster of a production.

The band, established by **Pedro "Pocholo" Segundo** in March, 2011, strives to revive salsa dura and make it as popular as it was in the 70s and 80s. "My idea," says Segundo, "was to form a group of friends who have an incredible musical trajectory and who respectfully interpret the music of legends like Ismael Rivera, Marvin Santiago, Héctor Lavoe, and others. The music is played from their hearts and souls, for the dancers to enjoy."

As the Boricua Legends' musical director/conguero/bongocero, Segundo feels honored to have some of the salsa industry's most distinguished and respected musicians onboard: Gilberto "Pulpo" Colón, Jr. (piano), Ruben Rodriguez, Jr. (bass), Héctor "Tito" Rodriguez, Jr. (trumpet), Al Acosta (tenor sax and flute), Eric Veléz (congas), Carlos "Carly" Maldonado (congas), Edwin Gómez (bongó), Endel Dueño (timbal), and Luisito Ayala (lead vocalist), plus guest singers Osvaldo Róman, Jorge Maldonado, and Rey Bayona. Carla Virola offers the second voice on "Soy Boricua", and coros are provided by Jorge Maldonado, Luis Blasini, Héctor L. Aponte and Héctor "Tito" Rodriguez, Jr. Check out their version of the classic "Rompe Saragüey." This month, the Boricua Legends will travel to Caracas, Venezuela, bringing the city's heat index way up, no doubt!





For **Chico Alvarez**, his new Palomonte Afro-Cuban Big Band CD “Country Roots/Urban Masters” is a dream come true. “Ever since I heard the mighty sound of the Tito Rodriguez Orchestra at the Palladium Ballroom, back in 1963,” says Alvarez, “I’ve always wanted to record with a big band. It was such a colossal and all-encompassing sound—no electronic instruments, no gimmicks. It was a sound as acoustic s as you could get, with dynamics that allowed you to hear every little nuance.”

The bandleader/lead vocalist recalls that back in those days, the musicians had the surround-sound thing going, long before the concept was even invented. The art of the big band was then—and still is—Alvarez’s passion. “Through the miracle of record albums and old films,” he explains, “I was able to appreciate the deepness of Benny Moré’s big band—in all its pre-Castro glory—apart from his mastery as a vocalist, as well as the monster bands led by Bebo Valdés and Don Azpiazu. And then there was the unique showmanship of Pérez Prado and his gift to the world—mambo. I now fully understand the importance of this man. I saw the effect that his music had on people. It was sheer madness.”

Alvarez adds that he came in at the tail end of it all, and that his generation had its own fads. “In later years, when the mania over the pachanga, boogaloo, and Latin soul had died down, I once again turned to the big band sound, witnessing firsthand the smooth sophistication of the Machito Orchestra and the dynamics of Tito Puente. I rarely danced, because watching them was a treat unto itself. It never dawned on me that I was listening to the only two surviving big bands left in New York. When I finally realized that this beautiful hunk of sound was on its way to becoming obsolete, I vowed that someday I would front such a band.”

Throughout the years, Alvarez has continued to nurture and cultivate that sound, even as everyone else was downsizing. He is happy that he has stuck to his guns, and he expresses pertinent thanks: “I’d like to end on a note of gratitude, not only to all those music masters I’ve mentioned, but also to the dedicated musicians who participated in this project, not for the money, but as a labor of love. A very special ‘thank you’ must be handed out to musical director/pianist Edy Martínez, whose arrangements and musical insights gave me inspiration, and to mix master Harvey Averde for his two sets of ears — he was crucial in helping me bring that ‘sound’ out of the cobwebs.”

In addition to Martínez, Alvarez's list of players reads like a "who's who": Carlos del Pino and Rubén Rodríguez (bass), Wilson "Chembo" Corniel (tumbadoras), Nelson Díaz (timbal), Luis Mangual, Jr., (bongó and cencerro), Diego López (drums), Roberto Rodríguez, Jr., Steve Gluzband, Ray Vega, and Guido González (trumpets), and Peter Brainin, Enrique Fernández, Al Acosta, and Octavio Ponce (saxophones); plus special guest Johnny Rodríguez (tumbadoras and bongó), Gene Golden (tumba, quinto, guataca), Mauricio Smith, Jr. (flute), Oscar Hernández, Chiemi Nakai and Sergio Rivera (piano) Rafael Cruz (chékere), Héctor Torres and Lino Fernández (timbales), Hiram Díaz (tumbadoras), Tony Cruz (cencerro), Eddie "Guagua" Rivera (bass), Mike Pérez (violin), Tiffany Rodríguez (violin and viola), and Eloy Oliveros (drums and bongó).



**George Vega and his Grupo Afinke** have released a single titled "Farandulero," and are hoping to finish recording three more numbers by June. Originally formed in 1995, the band has reunited with the objective of recording original, hardcore salsa, under the musical direction of lead trumpeter Tony Barrero, who has played with luminaries, including Tito Puente, Louie Ramirez, and José Alberto (El Canario).

**DJ Jeff's "Hot Pick of the Month":** Conjunto La Perla's "Se Le Fue El Tren."

**Around town...** "Salsa Fridays" take place at Manhattan's Ballroom-Off-Fifth, with DJs Alex and Mar y Sol, the latter guesting on my Saturday afternoon program, "¡Qué Viva La Música!" (89.1 WFDU-FM and [www.wfdu.fm](http://www.wfdu.fm)), impressing my listeners with her exquisite "old-school" taste. Mar y Sol also spins the classics, along with DJs Broadway and Andy, for "Nada Más" Sundays at Club Iguana.

On the West Gate Lounge's roster this month: Son 9 (May 5th), Henry Fiol (May 12th), Mambo Lebrón -a tribute to the Lebrón Brothers (May 19th), and Don Perignón y La Puertorriqueña, with Rico Walker, José González, and Josué Rosado (May 26th).

On May 19th, El Club Cubano Interamericano presents "The Original Traditional Fiesta del Mamoncillo (Recordando el Mamoncillo)" at the Bohemian Hall & Beer Garden, in Astoria, New York, featuring three bands: Conjunto Clásico, SonSublime, and Charanga '76, plus DJ Broadway.

¡Hasta la próxima!



## LATIN BEAT UPDATE

By **Nelson Rodríguez**

It's hard to believe that we have reached the lowest level in decades of commercial radio and television support for new salsa and Latin jazz releases, while more and more recordings of these genres are released on a monthly basis.

One of the pleasant surprises of the month is the Miami-based group **Iba A Se**, led by Puerto Rican percussionist Edgar Rodríguez and Dominican saxophonist Víctor Payano, whose "must-have" CD "Opus Mundi" taps the rich history of Latin jazz and the wealth of Caribbean folkloric influences. Some of those that contribute to this project are Charlie Sepúlveda, Giovanni Hidalgo, Edwin Bonilla, Eddie 'Guagua' Rivera, Tony Pérez, and Chucky López Jr. The musical production is superb, as demonstrated on the tracks "But Not For Me", "Boogasón", "Triad Blues", "De Nuevo a La Carga", "Miami Chapter", "Mulata", "Barriada Rosa", "Quacedito", and "I Got Rhythm."

From Ann Arbor, Michigan, comes conguero **Robert Mulligan's Grupo Ayé**, whose fine debut, "Guajiro del Corazón", is a mixture of salsa and Latin jazz, with vocals handled by Oscar González and Daniel Montejo Velázquez. The band combines original material with some traditional covers like "Químbara", "Summertime", "Todo Tiene Su Final", and others.

**La Sonora Libre**, led by conguero/composer Mauricio Ochoa, offers one of two recordings



released this month in Spain. Their CD "Salsa Dura and Latin Jazz: Pa'l Barrio, Pa'l Bailador" is just that - music designed for fans of Latin jazz and hardcore salsa. The standouts here are "La Bicicleta", "Con Mi Tumbao", "La Controversia," "Pim Pum Pam-Baila Pegao" (with vocals by La Sucursal SA's Marcelo Rosero), "Déjalo Todo", and "El Barrio."

The other release from Spain was recorded by a band led by trumpeter José **Chacón: Chacón y Su Son's** debut, "La Mejor Salsa", features the hot tracks "El Que Mando", "Ana Mile", "Tu Loco Loco", and "Llevo Perfume a Tí".

Salsa music with spiritual or religious themes is nothing new, but today it has become part of one of the most rapidly growing Latin music industries, which also expands to the fields of merengue, bachata, cumbia, and Spanish-language ballads. The CD titled **Héctor Olmos y Orquesta al Compás de Cristo** (produced by Julito Alvarado) is a wonderful example that music can be both rhythmically swinging and spiritually uplifting at the same time. The opening track "Ofrendas de Generales" - featuring vocalists Alex D'Castro (whom I promoted at TH Records before I moved on to RMM in 1991) and Ezequiel Colón - is a scorcher.

**Víctor Manuelle** continues to be one of the hottest salsa acts in the world, as proven on his new CD "Busco Un Pueblo", including the hits "Junto a Tí", "Como Le Digo al Alma", "Sí Tú Me Besas", "Amar de Nuevo", "Ella Cambió Mi Vida", and "Ella Lo Que Quiere Es Salsa."

Many years ago, saxophonist **Mario Rivera** recorded the historic jazz-merengue LP "El Comandante" (Groovin' High, 1993), and conguero Alex Díaz has continued that tradition on his awesome CD "Beyond 145th Street", with key performances and compositions by Iván Renta and Pedro Bermúdez, plus great covers of Cal Tjader's "Santo Domingo," Sam Jones' "Unit Seven," Vince Guaraldi's "Ginza Samba," and Jack Lawrence/Arthur Altman's "All or Nothing At All" (popularized by Frank Sinatra).

Reedman/vocalist **Nalisco Taveras'** debut ("Son Salvaje") is a very nice recording that includes the tracks "Pata Kun Ping Ping", "Ponte a Bailar", "Bounce", "El Campesino", "Se Duermen Los Muertos", "Sangre, Sudor y Lagrimas", and "Fuerza Bruta."







Veteran **Mike Freeman** -leading the band Zona Vibe- produced the CD "The Vibesman", which features Rubén Rodríguez, Papo Pepín, and Harry Adorno, plus special guests Mauricio Smith Jr., Julio Salgado & Jim Gailloro. You'll enjoy my favorite tracks -"Jigsaw Puzzle", "Vibe Descarga", "Drifting", "Lucky Seven", "So Long, Just Walking By", "Too Groovy", and "Blue."

**Chico Alvarez** is not only a popular radio show host (at WBAI in New York), a seasoned producer and graphic artist, and a contributor to Latin Beat Magazine; but has also functioned as a top bandleader/performer in New York City for many years. His latest CD, "El Montunero (Country Roots/Urban Masters)", featuring his own Palomonte Afro-Cuban Big Band, is one of this year's best recordings, as exemplified by its great opening track ("Esta Noche"), the bolero "Arsenio and Linda", and the Latin jazz gems "Macho's Latin Satin", and "Tonight". The CD features Edy Martínez as musical director and a lineup that includes Chembo Corniel, Luis Mangual Jr., Rubén Rodríguez, Ray Vega, Al Acosta, Johnny Rodríguez, Noah Bless, Peter Branin, Enrique Fernández, Roberto Rodríguez, Steve Gluzband, Gene Golden, Mauricio Smith Jr., Sergio Rivera, and many more.

Cuban **Jorge Gómez Nava** (El Suave) left Cándido Fabré's band in 2008, and now leads Orquesta Suave Tumbao in what is considered by many as one of this year's hot new revelations from Cuba. Their CD, "La Cañonera", is full of great tracks, including "Mala Cantidad", "¿Qué Más Quiere?" "Ella Está Como El Havana Club", "Deja Que Te Digan Viejo", and "No Te Lo Imaginas."

**Azúcar Negra** hits the U.S. with its timba CD "Se Acabó El Pescao", which contains some potential club and radio hits, such as "A Mi, La Habana", "Sacúdete Que Tiene Arena" "El Simpático", and "No Me Parezco a Nadie" (featuring Tania Pantoja).

**Alexis Llenera** has played trombone for many bands (Dan Den, La Monumental, Enrique Álvarez & Charanga Latina, Charanga América, Chico Alvarez, Raúlín Rosendo, Cubanosón, etc.), but now leads the group known as **Alexis y su Sabor Habanero**, whose CD "Mi Tumbao" shall be loved by all salseros. Wait until you hear "Para Mi Cuba", "Mi Música", "Mi Tumbao", "Mi Vecina", "El Parálítico", "Deja Esa Locura", "¿Qué Pasa Loco?", and their own theme song -"Tema Sabor Habanero."

**Willy García** (one of the two voices of Son de Café) went solo with his CD "Sigo Presente", and hit it big with the following tracks: "Tengo Miedo a Enamorarme", "Cariño Bueno", "Sí Me Dejas", "Eso No", "No Escaparás", and "Moriré Besándote." I see this CD doing very well at Los Angeles K-LOVE.

Another surprisingly good debut comes from vocalist **Tony Canales' Con Klase**, whose CD "El Comienzo" contains such impressive tunes as "Con-Klase", "Mi Terreno", "La Mujer Puertorriqueña", "Homenaje a Los Que Fueron," and "Rumba Para Los Rumberos."



## DESDE BORINQUEN

**Por: Elmer González**

**Fotos por Miguel Rojas**

MARZO: MES DE LA SALSA Y EL JAZZ EN PUERTO RICO. Durante el mes de marzo se celebraron los dos eventos anuales más importantes de la salsa y del jazz en Puerto Rico: El concierto del Día Nacional de la Zalsa (DNZ) y el Puerto Rico Heineken Jazz Fest (PRHJF).

El domingo 25 bajo una fuerte amenaza de lluvia, miles de salseros repitieron el ritual de asistir al Estadio Hiram Bithorn en San Juan para festejar su música durante más de diez horas en la edición número 29 de este evento que auspicia la radioemisora Z93.



En esta ocasión, se le brindó reconocimientos a la Orquesta Corporación Latina y a la Orquesta Zodiac. Dos agrupaciones locales que fueron favoritas de los jóvenes boricuas en la década de 1970. Además, se le rindió homenaje póstumo al cantante Frankie Ruiz con la presentación de su hijo Frankie Ruiz Jr. interpretando algunos éxitos de su padre. La orquesta de Tommy Olivencia se sumó al homenaje con la interpretación de los éxitos mayores de Ruiz en las voces de Simón Pérez, Mel Martínez y Viti Ruiz, entre otros.



Frankie Ruiz Jr.

El público disfrutó las presentaciones en tarima de Tito Rojas, Villarini Salsa Project, Roberto Roena y su Apollo Sound con sus cantantes originales, La Sonora Ponceña con Issac Delgado como sonero invitado y Andy Montañez con los pleneros del grupo Atabal.





El concierto del DNZ fue creado hace 29 años por el programador de Z93 Pedro Arroyo, quien murió inesperadamente el pasado 14 de abril. Esperamos que este evento se siga presentando y que se aleje un poco de la insularidad musical y el reciclaje artístico de los pasados diez años, invitando a la tarima a buenos exponentes de la salsa que se sigue haciendo en otros países fuera de la Isla. Por otra parte, el Anfiteatro Tito Puente fue nuevamente el escenario de la edición número 22 del PRHJF celebrado durante los días 29 de marzo al 1 de abril.



Este año se le dedicó al bajista mexicano Abraham Laboriel quien ya se había presentado aquí en años anteriores como miembro de varias agrupaciones.



La oferta musical estuvo compuesta por artistas internacionales y locales con un menú de fusiones de músicas del mundo y el jazz.



En esa línea escuchamos a la pianista española Ariadna Castellanos con su concepto "Middle Oriental Flamenco", un homenaje a Astor Piazzola con el trío del pianista argentino Mario Parmisano y el grupo de flamenco del guitarrista Paco De Lucía.





Además, se presentaron la cantante Dee Dee Bridgewater con la dirección musical del pianista Edsel Gómez, el trío de Michel Camilo con Giovanni Hidalgo, Poncho Sánchez y los grupos "IQ" y "Fusion Quartet" del saxofonista boricua José Heredia y su compatriota, el bajista Agustín Barreto, respectivamente.



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