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# Columns ⊕ ⊕ ⊕

JUNE/JULY 2012 ISSUE

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## QUÉ PASA IN LA

By Rudy Mangua1



**Bloque 53**  
Cogelo Ahi  
**Windows Media**  
**Quicktime**

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**Chico Álvarez**  
El Indio Caonabo  
**Windows Media**  
**Quicktime**

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**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

## Ricardo Lemvo

**The 34th Annual Playboy Jazz Festival** will present a world-class lineup of jazz icons and rising stars on Saturday, June 16th, and Sunday, June 17th, at the Hollywood Bowl. Headliners include Ramsey Lewis, Robin Thicke, Ozomatli, Sheila E, Boney James, Chico Trujillo, and Christian McBride (and just added, local favorite Louie Cruz Beltrán). For tickets and more information, visit [www.playboyjazzfestival.com](http://www.playboyjazzfestival.com).

**"Grand Performances"** —Los Angeles' premiere free outdoor summer performing arts series invites everyone to their 26th annual summer events. Grand Performances' 10-week season (Friday, June 22, to Saturday, August 25) features 33 events and more than 100 artists and ensembles. All events are free of charge, providing everyone the opportunity to experience a handpicked selection of emerging and established world music, jazz, dance and theater acts. Most events begin at 8:00 p.m. and take place at California Plaza in Downtown Los Angeles. Performances range from the "Intimate Puppetry of Mexico: **Unexpected**", (July 12 & 13), to the extravagant **Jazz Mafia** (San Francisco's 38-piece ensemble), and the 70-member orchestra and 40-voice choir of **Symphony of Hope** (August 3). Other highlights include performances by **Brownout** and **El Gavachillo y su Banda Lluvia de Estrellas** (August 24), and acoustic guitar virtuosos **Strunz and Farah** (August 25). Grand Performances, in partnership with the Los Angeles Film Festival and Dance Camera West, introduces Angelinos to the city's first **Dirty Dancing Dance-A-Long** on Friday, June 22. This unique event includes pre-show salsa lessons to encourage audience participation. The legacy of the iconic Cuban bassist/bandleader Israel "Cachao" López is celebrated with the event titled **¡Vamos al Mambo!** on July 21st. For a complete schedule of performances and more information, visit [www.grandperformances.org](http://www.grandperformances.org) or call (213) 687-2190.

**The Autry's Sizzling Summer Nights** returns with new bands and fan favorites. This annual popular outdoor dance party for all ages features los Angeles' best salsa bands on Thursdays, from July 5 through August 30, (6:00 – 9:00 p.m.) at Griffith Park's Autry National Center. Salsa dancing & hot-off-the-grill food, ice-cold drinks and spirits, open museum galleries, and a separate children's dance floor make this a special summer evening family outing. Experience the magic of live salsa bands performing in the casual energetic setting of the Autry Plaza. Bands headlining this season include **Chino Espinoza & Los Dueños del Son** (July 5), **Angel Lebrón y su Sabor Latino** (July 12), **Orquesta Tabaco y Ron** (July 19), **Conjunto Afro-Son & Friends** (July 26), **Octavio Figueroa & La Combinación** (August 2), **Ricardo Lemvo & Makina Loca** (August 9), **Yari Moré y su Orquesta** (August 16), **Johnny Polanco y su Conjunto Amistad** (August 23), and **Orquesta Son Mayor** (August 30). Admission is free for Autry members, \$10 for adults, \$6 for students and seniors, and \$4 for children (ages 3-12) and children under 3 get in free. Admission to the Autry National Center museum is free on the second Tuesday of every month. For more information, visit [www.theautry.org](http://www.theautry.org).

**The 19th Annual Oxnard Salsa Festival** takes place on July 28 and 29 at Plaza Park (Fifth and B Streets) in historic downtown Oxnard. Presented by the Oxnard Downtowners, this annual event features spicy food and fiery entertainment, drawing around 45,000 salsa lovers to the City of

### 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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Oxnard for the two-day action packed celebration. Everything salsa — food, music and dance — is on the menu of this popular regional festival. Event highlights include Main Stage entertainment provided by West Coast salsa and Latin jazz bands; the Salsa Tasting Tent (featuring over 50 different salsas), an eclectic vendor marketplace, international foods, Kids Komer attractions, and more. Event admission and parking are free. Main Stage band line-up includes the following acts... Saturday, July 28: **Fay Roberts & Orquesta Charangoa** (11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.), **Johnny Polanco & Conjunto Amistad** (2:00 to 4:00 p.m.), and **Angel Lebrón & Sabor Latino** (4:45 p.m. to 6:45 p.m.). Sunday, July 29: **Fito Reynoso's Ritmo y Armonía** (11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.), **Janeen Puente Orchestra** (2:00 to 4:00 p.m.), and **Orquesta Tabaco y Ron** (4:45 p.m. to 6:45 p.m.). For more information, call (805) 247-0197 or visit [www.oxnardsalsafestival.com](http://www.oxnardsalsafestival.com)

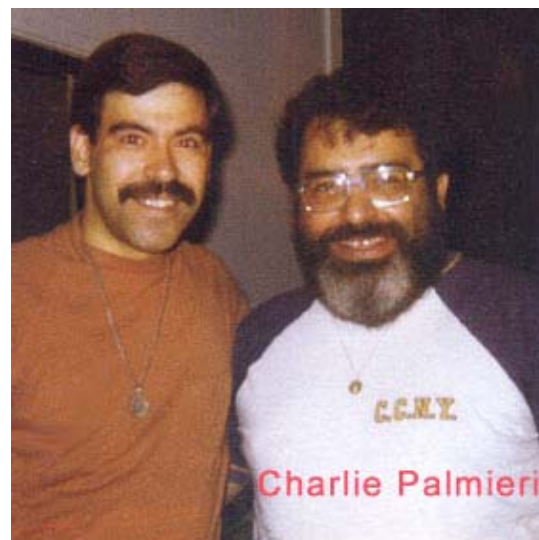
Support all your local artists and their venues. Peace.



## A BITE FROM THE APPLE

By Vicki Solá

My friendship with music collector **Tommy Bonafé** (pictured with many greats) goes back to 1983. He continues to amaze me and the rest of his radio listeners with his vintage vinyl arsenal of 78s and LPs, as well as live music he has recorded throughout the decades in diverse N.Y. venues, including the New York Hilton, the New York Sheraton, the Corso, Havana-San Juan, Trocadero, Bronx Casino, Teatro Puerto Rico, Roseland, Hipocampo, Ochenta's, Schutzen Park, La Maganette, Casa Blanca, SOB's, and Central Park, among other clubs, hotels, concert halls, and public locations where he has taped El Gran Combo, Eddie Palmieri, Orquesta Broadway, Típica Novel, Machito, Tito Puente, Ismael Rivera, Ray Barretto, La Ideal, Típica 73, Bobby Valentín, Willie Rosario, Willie Colón, Héctor Lavoe, Manny Oquendo & Libre, Sonora Ponceña, and countless others.



Bonafé recalls listening to WEVD's "The Latin Soul Show," hosted by Symphony Sid, in the early sixties. "Even though I was still into rock and roll," he says, "I used to sit on the stoop with my friend Angel Pérez, on Vise Avenue, and listen to Symphony Sid on a transistor radio. Like everyone else, I got hooked on these new rhythms through that program."

The Bronx Casino was located on Third Avenue. "Angel and I would take the train there, wait

outside, and watch people go into the club. Everyone was well dressed. Next to the Bronx Casino was La Campana, a bar where musicians hung out before entering the club. Everyone in the music industry went there—I'd look through the window and see Tito Puente, Joe Quijano, Joe Cuba, Charlie Palmieri, Orlando Marín, and many others."

Bonafé, who at one time lived on Bryant Avenue, heard some great music coming from one of the apartments. "A friend informed me that Tito Puente's conga player, Frankie Malavé, lived there," says the collector. "We were thrilled on the night when we finally met him."

He fondly remembers those weekends when congueros from every street came out to jam, and how Luis Santos was the best conga player on the block. "It didn't make any difference," says Bonafé, "if you were good or bad. You were just out there to have a good time. These sessions attracted known congueros, like Milton Cardona and Frankie Rodriguez. Of the three, I thought Luis Santos was the best—it was like watching Giovanni Hidalgo play. Milton joined Willie Colón's band and Frankie became Ricardo Ray's conguero. Luis Santos moved out of the neighborhood—we never saw him again."

Avenue called the Colgate Gardens transmitted live broadcasts of its featured bands, including Eddie Palmieri & La Perfecta (with vocalist Ismael Quintana), Charlie Palmieri & La Duboney, Ray Barretto's Charanga La Moderna (with Manny Román on vocals, José "Chombo" Silva on sax, and El Negro Vivar on trumpet), and the sixteen-piece Machito Orchestra (with vocalist Graciela), and Orquesta Broadway (with Roberto Torres on vocals)



Bonafé recalls his first visit to the Colgate Gardens: "Angel and I went to the barbershop to get Peter Gunn haircuts—short haircuts—and then we went to Third Avenue to buy sharkskin suits. It was going to be the first time we'd be going to a club to listen to live music. We waited on line, paid three dollars each, and were in—no questions asked. If I'm not mistaken, it was 1962, and we were under eighteen. Orquesta Broadway played first. The third set belonged to Eddie Palmieri. The minute we heard his piano solo, we knew we were right about this being the music of our souls."

They also went to the Riverside Plaza, Manhattan Center, Chez José, Honka Monka and the Hunts Point Palace. "Every Sunday," says Bonafé, "the Hunts Point Palace had matinees where we saw Joe Cuba, Pete Rodríguez, Johnny Colón, King Nando, Johnny Pacheco, Joe Bataan, Joe Acosta, Orquesta Dee Jay, the TNT Boys, Joey Pastrana, Kako, and Willie Colón (with this skinny "jíbarito" singer named Héctor Lavoe).



Bonafé once lived in the same Bronx building as Gilberto "Pulpo" Colón, Jr. and his mother. "I'd hear this beautiful 'jíbaro' (rural Puerto Rican) music coming from their apartment. When the music stopped, I'd hear this banging on pots and pans. It drove me crazy. After a while, it stopped—someone must've bought him a drum set, thank God! One day I ran into Gilberto in the hallway. He was carrying a trumpet case and mentioned that he was playing in the school band. What a relief, no more banging! After I moved, I ran into him at the clubs. He was playing piano for Rafi Val & La Diferente, and later on, with Chocolate Armenteros, Pete "El Conde" Rodríguez, and Héctor Lavoe. I mentioned to Gil how great it was that he went from pots to piano."





In the seventies, Bonafé began collecting records. At R&R Records (on Burnside Avenue in the Bronx) he met the shop's owner, Combo Records' Ralph Cartagena, and his administrator, Bobby Rodríguez. Bonafé credits the latter, based on his knowledge of the industry, for providing significant assistance in the process of collecting such great music. Rodríguez ended up moving to Puerto Rico and becoming Cartagena's assistant producer and distributor on the island. Every time Rafael Ithier's El Gran Combo came to New York, he'd ask Bonafé to meet with him and "the boys." Bonafé, Rafael Ithier, and "the boys" have been friends ever since.





During the late sixties and early seventies, the Catskills venue known as Las Villas held frequent dances, and fifteen dollars would get Bonafé a bus ride, a food voucher-for a Puerto Rican combo plate of arroz con gandules, pernil, and fried plantains, plus salad and beverage-and entrance to the dances, where live bands performed. On other occasions, he'd head to Orchard Beach. "This is where all the Puerto Ricans went," says Bonafé. "A big group of us would pack a cooler with beer, sandwiches and soft drinks, and then go to Section Nine, where Ernie Ensley played the recordings he had made at the clubs the night before. This is when I started thinking how great it would be if I could record at these clubs, just like Ernie."

The way Ensley set up his equipment fascinated Bonafé. "One night, at the Hipocampo, where Charlie Palmier (with singer Vitín Aviles) and Orquesta Son were playing, Ernie (who was the DJ) walked in with his Robert reel-to-reel tape recorder. He went up to the stage and set up his four mics over the house mics and strapped them with rubber bands. Then he plugged the mics into a small mixer and began recording. With his headphones, he was able to listen to the recordings. If he wanted more piano, bass, or brass, he just turned the mixer's control knobs to adjust the volume. That's the way amateur recording was done in those days. It was beautiful and exciting."

A few weeks later, Bonafé went to a pawnshop and bought himself a used tape recorder, four old mics and a small mixer. Then he asked Ensley for advice. "He wasn't happy about me jumping into his turf, but he still gave me a crash course on recording. I thanked him, then headed to the Corso with my newly acquired used recorder to tape El Gran Combo. I did everything Ernie told me to do-I set up my mics and mixer; then waited for the band to start playing. I was surprised how well the recording came out." El Gran Combo had just come in from Puerto Rico and brought the house down when they played "Un Verano en Nueva York."

Throughout the years, Bonafé often shared stages and ideas with the late Ensley. "I didn't realize," he says, "that every time I was on stage, I was recording a piece of history."

Not every recording came without challenges. In 1973, Bonafé attended Venezuela's First International Salsa Festival, a three-day affair featuring heavyweights from all over the Latin music world, like Sonora Matancera, Celia Cruz, El Gran Combo, Cheo Feliciano, Ismael Rivera, Daniel Santos, Orquesta Aragón, Dimensión Latina (with Oscar D'León), Ismael Miranda, and Típica 73.

A week later, Bonafé went to the Corso to record Ray Barretto. "The first group on stage was Sonora Matancera," he recalls. "I started setting up my mic when their director, Roberto, came

over and told me to remove my mics from the stage-he didn't want the band to be recorded. I told him that I was setting up for Ray, who was playing the second set, and I congratulated him for the nice presentation that Sonora Matancera and Celia had made in Venezuela. He turned around and said I could record the band this time, but next time I should ask for his permission."



In the eighties, Ralph Mercado threw a big dance at a famous clothing store located on Broadway. Three groups were playing: El Gran Combo, Bobby Valentín (with Cano Estremera) and Conjunto Clásico. "I walked in, went over to the engineer and asked if I could plug my tape recorder into the system," says Bonafé. "In the middle of recording Conjunto Clásico, I was disconnected. I asked the engineer why, and he replied that Ralph Mercado had told him to stop me from recording. I ran downstairs and saw Ralph. He asked me why I hadn't come to him for permission to record at his dance. I apologized and mentioned that in the past he'd seen Ernie and me recording in clubs. He looked at me, took out his business card, and wrote on the back to plug me back into the system. Then he told me to ask for his permission next time."

One of Bonafé's favorite stories concerns a 1973 encounter with Tito Puente at the Corso. "I told him I wanted to give him a copy of the recording of his group that I taped at Act One in the Bronx. He told the bartender to give me a drink, and then he gave me ten dollars to buy a blank recording tape to make the copy for him. I thanked Puente for the drink, but told him I couldn't take the ten dollars. A week later, I went to the Corso and gave him his copy."





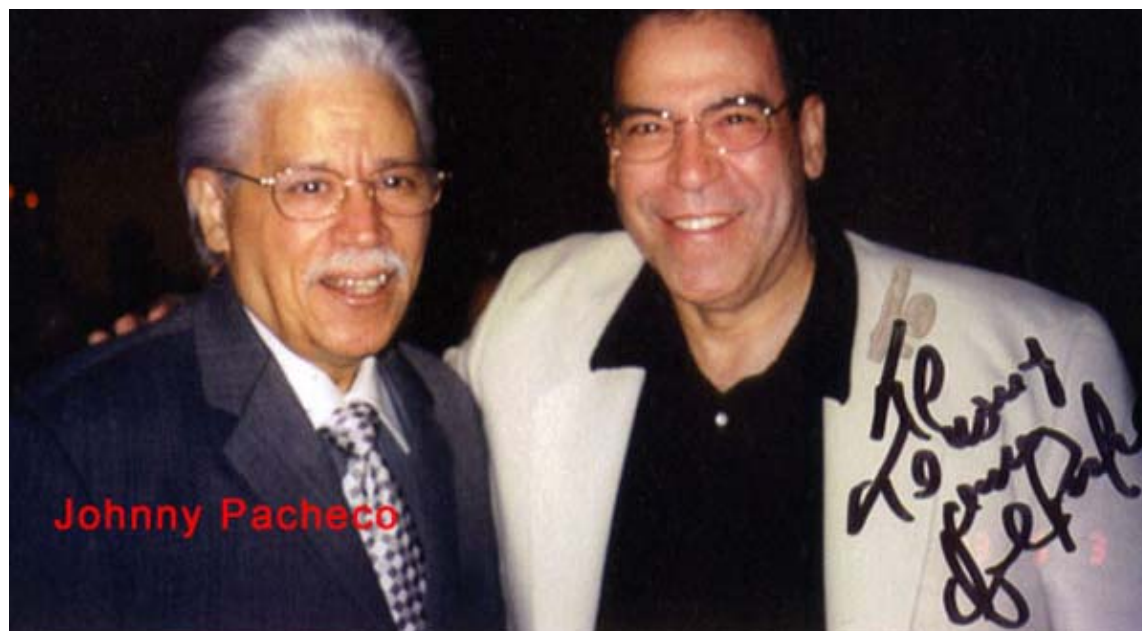


During the late sixties, when he had an office job at Gallagher's Steak House on 52nd and Broadway (across from Roseland Ballroom and the closed Palladium), Bonafé would visit Izzy Sanabria at the graphic designer's 52nd Street headquarters. "During my lunch hour I'd watch Izzy, whom I had met years before when he taught art at the Boys Club, producing the artwork for album covers and posters of upcoming dances. He would introduce me to the musicians who stopped by to see their finished products. It was great to hang out with them."

Bonafé witnessed a historic moment at the Triton, a club located next to the Hunts Point Palace. Frequented by luminaries like Carlos "Patato" Valdés, Johnny Pacheco, Tito Puente, and Al Santiago, the Triton had become one of the Bronx's hottest after-hours spots. "Eddie Palmieri walks into the club one night," says Bonafé, "and sees this trombonist on stage. He was impressed by the way in which he improvised and played without ever reading a chart. It was Barry Rogers, and Palmieri asked him to join his group."

The Hipocampo opened in 1972, and Bonafé was one of the bartenders. "We were known as 'the team', which also included Ismael "East" Carlo (who later moved to California and became an actor) and Manny Iglesias, a Long Island car salesman. Everyone told us that we were the best. We were friendly and flamboyant—a perfect fit for the club. While the band played, we'd put on our own show. Once called the Stardust Ballroom, the place had high ceilings and good acoustics, and at the bar, we had wallpaper with dogs dressed like people that fascinated the customers."





One Monday night at the club was more exciting than usual. "The crowd that came was not our ordinary crowd-the dancers-but 'businessmen.' As Ismael Miranda & La Revelación played, a fight broke out-there was a scuffle and a guy was punched to the floor. He struggled to the door, pulled out a pistol and shot twice at the guy who'd hit him, then ran downstairs. Everyone ducked under their tables, and the musicians' instruments flew up in the air as they ran for cover. The bullets landed ten feet from where I was standing-it all happened so fast that I didn't have time to react. A few minutes later, the musicians picked up their instruments off the floor, went back onto the stage, and began playing right from where they'd left off, as if nothing had happened. But, unfortunately, the bullets had landed in the wall with the doggie wallpaper and ruined my two favorite dogs!"

In the seventies, Bonafé met musicologist René López at Teatro Puerto Rico. "I was there to record El Gran Combo's reunion with its original cast-it was an honor being on stage with all these great musicians. I met Ismael Rivera, Rafael Ithier, Pellín Rodríguez, Roberto Roena, and others. After the show, René invited me and some musicians to his home. It was like being in a library-his wall was filled with 78s and LPs. He played some 78s and everyone began discussing who was playing on those records-it brought back real memories of the good old days."

Several weeks later, Bonafé heard about a record sale on Prospect Avenue in the Bronx. "I walked in," he says, "and asked if there were any rare records I could buy. The woman at the counter opened the basement door and said, 'Be my guest.' I walked down the stairs and saw that the basement was flooded. In order to walk, they had put milk crates on the floor. As I walked on these crates, I noticed 78s stacked up on the shelf in their original binders. They must've been there a long time and some had fallen into the water. I went through the lot and came across

diverse releases issued by the RCA, Tico, Pernod, Columbia, Gema, and Alegre labels, including recordings made by Eddie Palmieri, Johnny Pacheco, Orlando Marín and Kako. I ran upstairs to ask how much these records were, and was told that each cost a dollar."

For the next three months, Bonafé made additional trips to that store to buy 78s. He ended up with about 150 of them. One day, when he arrived, he saw a man with the abovementioned woman. The two informed him that each record would now cost \$2.50. "By that time," he recalls, "I'd already bought the best records on the shelves. I even got the Combo series-thirty 78s from the late 1950s. I didn't want to argue, and agreed to their terms. During those next months, I added at least fifty more records to my collection."

Bonafé recorded in Roseland during the days Phil Peters featured five bands a night, including top acts like Tito Puente, Sonora Ponceña, Eddie Palmieri, Héctor Lavoe, El Gran Combo, Willie Rosario, Bobby Valentín, Orquesta Broadway, Fajardo y sus Estrellas, Charanga América, Manny Oquendo's Conjunto Libre, and Oscar D'León, along with a merengue band from the Dominican Republic. "Phil Peters' dances were always packed," says Bonafé. "One evening, he brought in El Combo de Ayer, comprised of former Gran Combo members Andy Montañez, Pellin Rodríguez and Roberto Roena. Ernie Ensley and I were recording on the stage. The hall's capacity was three thousand. That night, six thousand people showed up-you couldn't walk inside the place, and people were still outside waiting to come in. Someone called the fire department. They brought Phil Peters into the office to pay a fine, while the firefighters were enjoying the show. And we still recorded away!"

After the Hipocampo closed, Bonafé and his close friend, Mario Barris, frequented the ever-packed Pozo's Club, located on Willis Avenue in the Bronx, where they would often run into Charlie and Eddie Palmieri, Héctor Lavoe, Jimmy Sabater, Louie Ramírez, Tito Puente, Ralph Mercado, Chocolate Armenteros, and José Fajardo, among others.

Bonafé went to René López's house one evening with a group of musicians. "There was a knock at the door," says Bonafé. "Ray Barretto walked in. It was getting late and after a while, the other musicians left. Ray and I stayed. After a while, we looked out the window-there was a snowstorm. I knew I'd have to walk ten blocks to the train station in this blinding blizzard. Ray said, 'Don't worry, I'll take you home.' And he went out of his way to make sure that I got home safely-me, a complete stranger.... showing how the ties of our mutual love of Latin music can develop such strong brotherhood."

Tommy Bonafé will present four hours of his music (on June 23rd and November 24th) through my radio program ¡Qué Viva La Música! (89.1 WFDU-FM and [www.wfdu.fm](http://www.wfdu.fm)). "The music does not belong to me," states Bonafé, "but to our listening audience to enjoy."

**Laser luster... Ray Castro's Conjunto Clásico** comes out with a swinging CD, "Este Es Mi Conjunto" (RC Entertainment), presenting singer David Millán. Others onboard include Héctor Luis Pagán (vocals), Willie Romero and "Pequeño Johnny" Rivero (congas), Víctor "Junior" Cruz



(bongó), Kevin Rodríguez, Junior de Jesús and Nestor Milanés (piano), José García (tres), Héctor "Máximo" Rodríguez, Richie Viruet and Ray Agraz (trumpets). Check out the track "Camaleon"!



**More laser luster...** Yoko (La Japonesa Salsera) has released two new singles, "La Japonesa Salsera Llegó" and "Arigato Salsa," the latter of which is sung in Japanese. Both songs are available for download. Yoko, Cita Rodríguez and Nayibe La Gitana will be featured, along with The Mambo Legends Orchestra, in a program paying tribute to La Lupe, Graciela and Celia Cruz, to be conducted on July 10th at Damrosch Park, as part of the Lincoln Center's yearly "Midsummer Night Swing" series.

**DJ Jeff's "Hot Pick of the Month":** La Excelencia's "Nueva York Sin Tí."

**Around town...** The reopened **González y González** features live music from Thursday through Saturday. Their only entrance is located at 192 Mercer St., in the island of Manhattan.



On June 8th, **Concepto Sabor and Los Hermanos Colón** engage in a hard salsa battle at SOB's during an event called "Salseras vs. Salseros".

In a June 23rd concert billed as "A Night of Remembrance," **Joe Bataan** (the King of Latin Soul), and the classic soul group **Blue Magic** will be featured at Lehman Center for the Performing Arts.

Across the Hudson River (in Lyndhurst, New Jersey), **Jimmy Bosch's** orchestra will heat things up on June 24th at The Whiskey Café, in celebration of DJ Ray Colón's birthday. The Whiskey Café features live salsa every last Monday of the month.

On July 3rd, boogaloo pioneer **Johnny Colón** will perform at Lincoln Center's Damrosch Park.

The West Gate Lounge presents **Choco Orta** (June 2); **Grupo Latin Vibe** (June 9); **Jimmy Sabater, Jr.** and his orchestra, in a tribute to Jimmy Sabater, Sr. (June 16); **Frankie Morales** (June 23); and **Willie Villegas & Entre Amigos** (June 30).

The New Rochelle roster of Don Coquí's "Salsa Thursdays" includes the following acts: **Conjunto Imagen** (June 7), The New Swing Sextet (June 14), **Julio Salgado** (June 21), **Orquesta Broadway** (on June 28, celebrating Danny González's 35th year with the band), **Bronx Charanga** (July 5), **Luisito Rosario** (July 12), **Jimmy Delgado** (July 19), and **Típica Novel** (July 26).

¡Hasta la próxima!



## LATIN BEAT UPDATE

By Nelson Rodríguez





As we reach the halfway mark of 2012, we are coming across some fine conceptual recordings released by both musical veterans and newcomers.

One veteran who gets better with time is **Carlos Oliva** (leader of **Los Sobrinos del Juez**) who impressed critics in recent years with the CD "I'm A Believer" by taking huge pop hits from the 1970s and adding Spanish-language endings (mostly penned by Omar Hernández and Milton Salcedo) to such distinctively creative versions. The Miami-based group's CD/DVD combo titled "Y Seguimos Guarachando" contains arrangements by Omar Hernández, Camilo Valencia and Milton Salcedo on the standout tracks "El Pescaao," "Por Tí," "Castígame," "Pánfilo," "Con El Bosillo Pelao" and "Take It Easy."

One of today's best young bands is **La Excelencia**, whose CD "Ecos del Barrio" serves to showcase mostly original lyrics that tell meaningful stories (something we have been missing for many years in the salsa scene), as expressed by the great vocal talents of Edwin Pérez. Just listen to "Pal Mundo Entero," "María," "Entre Espinas," "Nueva York Sin Tí," "Dale Otra Oportunidad," "Anoche Soñé Contigo" and "Descarga La Excelencia." The abovementioned CD was sent to this writer by **Willie Otero's Latinos Unidos Record Pool** (LURP). Regarded as one of the oldest and most successful record pools in the world, LURP continues to provide DJs with great new releases of salsa, merengue, bachata, Latin jazz, reggeatón, vallenato, cumbia, etc.

The recent batch of recordings included new bachata releases by Prince Royce (Phase 2) and Lenny Santos (Aventurero), as well as vintage salsa reissues featuring Alfredo Linares, Orquesta Borinquen, Azuquita y su Melao, and La Protesta de Colombia. New recordings have been released by La Tropa Son (La Mañana Americana), Orlando Ortiz & Karibe Mambo Orchestra (At Full Swing), Orquesta Sinsaye de Venezuela (Traigo Una Rumba), La Sonora Sanjuanera de Puerto Rico (Pa'l Bailador Que Guapea), Jorge Alberto 'El Gallito Del Son' (A Bailar En Nueva York), Conjunto La Perla de Puerto Rico (El Conjunto Del Pueblo), Raza Latina de Colombia (Sabor y Sentimiento), Controversia/La Orquesta de Moda ( Así Es La Diferencia), Rosita Ulloa, Omaira Borrás (Las Divas De La Salsa), Plenealo (Soy Yo), and one of my favorite bands...Rumberos Del Callejón (Construyendo).

A group of musical veterans, **Ralph Irizarry & Los Viejos de la Salsa**, offer the conceptual CD "Viejos Pero Sabrosos," whose original lyrics are delivered by vocalists Marcial Isturiz and José Mangual Jr. This CD features arrangements by Ricky González, Nelson 'Gazú' Jaime, Richie Viruet, Ray Martínez, Lucho Cueto, Ramón Sánchez and Edy Martínez. Irizarry is backed by Rubén Rodríguez, 'Gazú', Martínez, Elías Lopes, Edy Martínez, Reynaldo Jorge, Bobby Franceschini and Carlitos Soto.

Another band with a bright future is the one led by pianist **Marlon Rosado**. On the CD titled "Retro," Marlon Rosado y La Riqueña pay tribute to Fania legends such as Ismael Miranda, Eddie Palmieri, Richie Ray & Bobby Cruz, Sonora Ponceña, Ray Barretto, Willie Colón and Cheo Feliciano, while highlighting a cast of distinguished guests; Bobby Cruz, Papo Lucca, Tony Vega, Ismael Miranda, Sal Cuevas, Tito Puente Jr., Luigi Texidor, Kevin Ceballo, Marlon Fernández and Quique Domenech.

Vocalist Don Sonero's debut, "La Verdadera Escena," injects today's salsa with a youthful tinge and refreshing approach. Hardcore salseros and DJs must listen to "Don Sonero Llegó," "Salsa Pura y Nada Más," "Sabor Clásico," "Son Son Sonero" and "Yo Soy La Bomba (In A Minor)".

Holland's **Masalsa's** offers the CD "Resurrección," produced by Oscar Hernández and percussionist Soeshiel Sharma. This pleasantly surprising recording contains such hits as "Hipocresía," "Rosa," "Judas," "Filosofonda," "Resurrección," "Hong Kong Criminal", and the title track.

Led by composer Pedrito González **La Negramenta** is back with the CD "Pa' Los Cuatro Vientos," which demonstrates why this band is regarded as one of the top acts in Venezuela. Vocalists Wiwi Buznego, Yoryi Pacheco, Marcial Isturiz and Wilmer Cobos deliver outstanding performances throughout this CD. DJs will love the tunes "Vicente y Arcadio," "En La Luna Es," "Plegaria," "Prende Pa' Cali," "Amor En Off," "Pedal y Bomba," and "Candela P'al Que Me Tire."

**Atabal's** new release (Soneros en la Plena) is a great concept album that features special guests Andy Montañez (our prayers are with him, wishing a speedy recovery from his recent accident), Tito Rojas, Herman Olivera, Víctor Manuelle, Luisito Carrión, Vico C, Jerry Medina, Wichy Camacho and Julio Voltio. It's an awesome thing to see the plena genre alive and well, as preserved by bands like Atabal, Plenealo and Plena Libre.

One highly recommended plena CD is **Gary Núñez & Plena Libre's** "Plena Al Salsero." Although this recording contains some of their previous hits and a few covers, it also includes new material, properly presented by one of today's best plena groups.

One of the best jazz bassists that emerged during the past decade is **John Benítez**, whose CD "Purpose" is comprised of both Latin jazz and straight-up jazz tracks. Most of these compositions were penned by Benítez. Pedro Martínez and Víctor Cruz handle the Antillean and Colombian percussion. Check out the tracks titled "Rumba," "Yagrumo" and "Bomba Lírica."

The renowned producer **Bobby Marín** has established the Mambo Music label, whose catalog includes vintage and contemporary recordings, such as the new CD of Charanga Pasión (led by flutist Connie Grossman and violinist Betsy Hill), featuring vocalist Deborah Resto on the tracks "I Will Survive" and "Coro Miyaré." The label specializes on rare singles that were produced by Bobby himself. Many of them can be found on the CD "Mambo Music Presents Classic Singles."

**El Septeto Santiaguero** (led by Aldén González Díaz) has a new recording, "Vamos Pa' La

Fiesta,” whose first single (“Lágrimas Negras”) features such guests as Rubén Blades, Cheo Feliciano, Jimmy Bosch, José Alberto (El Canario) and Edwin Colón Zayas.

Known as the composer for the Toronto-based salsa band Caché, Wilson Acevedo now presents his own project: **Wilson Acevedo & Jazzmeetsalsa’s** “En Trance”. The track titled “Gury’s Mambo” is dedicated one of the world’s top Latin radio hosts...Gury Gury. This album brings you the best elements found from the worlds of salsa and Latin jazz.



## DESDE BORINQUEN

Por: Elmer González

Fotos por Miguel Rojas



“EL CANARIO” CELEBRÓ 35 AÑOS DE CARRERA MUSICAL. El cantante José Alberto “El Canario” celebró en grande su trayectoria salsera de 35 años con un concierto el 21 de abril en el Anfiteatro Tito Puente, en San Juan.





Fue una reunión de figuras reconocidas de la música popular afroantillana ante un auditorio abarrotado de salseros y salseras que se movieron y cantaron al compás de los temas más sonados del intérprete de "Discúlpeme señora".



Camilo Azuquita

La velada se inició con el violinista Alfredo de la Fe y el panameño Camilo Azuquita. Luego se presentó José Alberto con el respaldo de una orquesta dirigida por Sammy Vélez. El público reaccionó eufórico con los coros y melodías de temas como: “La paella”, “Somos dos”, “Cada uno con lo suyo”, “Me dejó picao” y “Baila que baila”, entre otros.



Tal como se anunció previo al concierto, la actividad contó con otras figuras que se unieron a José Alberto para cantar y para expresar su amistad y cariño por el cantante dominicano. El primero fue el carismático Luisito Carrión quien inyectó energía adicional a la tarima con los temas “Yaré” y “Vete y pregona”.



Andy Montañez también se sumó a los invitados interpretando “El swing” y “Un verano en Nueva York” mientras se le unían el cantante Jerry Rivas de El Gran Combo y el bongosero Roberto Roena. Cerca de la medianoche, Domingo Quiñones deleitó a los presentes con “Salsumba” y “Llegó el sabor”.



La velada tuvo dos platos fuertes para finalizar iniciándose la madrugada con Ismael Miranda y su inseparable “Maria Luisa” y “Sueño contigo” junto al José Alberto. La fiesta se encendió al final cuando el reconocido sonero Cheo Feliciano provocó aún más el entusiasmo del auditorio con “Llegó el sonero” y “Anacaona”. La actividad fue una producción de Moncho Arriaga.



MIGUEL ZENÓN PRESENTÓ SU "ALMA ADENTRO". El saxofonista Miguel Zenón logró uno de sus proyectos más importantes en los pasados meses: Presentar en su tierra natal el repertorio de su disco "Alma adentro: el cancionero puertorriqueño".

El concierto se ofreció el 27 de abril en la nueva Sala Sinfónica Pablo Casals del Centro de Bellas Artes en Santurce ante un público que ovacionó su trabajo en varias ocasiones durante la velada ofrecida como parte de los conciertos de esta temporada de Pro Arte Musical, una entidad dedicada en su gran mayoría a la música clásica.

Zenón se presentó con su cuarteto en el que participa el pianista venezolano Luis Perdomo, el bajista austriaco Hans Glawischnig y el baterista boricua Henry Cole. Junto a ellos, estuvo un

conjunto de instrumentos de vientos con once músicos locales bajo la dirección de Ricardo Pons.

“Alma adentro” es el trabajo discográfico más reciente de Zenón en el que traduce al lenguaje del jazz boleros emblemáticos de compositores puertorriqueños. Zenón, criado en el Residencial Luis Llorens Torres de San Juan, logró con este trabajo unos tratamientos musicales distintos apoyados por sus ideas y arreglos de vanguardia en combinación con una orquestación adecuada a cargo del arreglista argentino Guillermo Klein.

El público disfrutó de las versiones jazzísticas de temas como: “Perdón”, “Silencio”, “Temes”, “Juguete”, “Olas y arenas” y el reconocido “Incomprendido”, que Ismael Rivera popularizó en el mundo de la salsa, con una versión de Zenón en la que musicalmente resalta el “lamento” y la tristeza que encierran la letra de este tema compuesto por Bobby Capó.

Esa noche, Miguel Zenón revalidó su fama en ascenso con una ejecutoria impresionante que mostró su creatividad espontánea y su capacidad de desatar emociones fuertes con pasajes y solos con su saxofón alto conectado bien adentro de su alma puertorriqueña.



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