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AUGUST 2010 ISSUE

Reviews

PICK OF THE MONTH

ROLANDO SÁNCHEZ

Vámonos de Fiesta/Let's Go Party (RSC Music)

Percussionist/bandleader Rolando Sánchez delivers his latest CD, *Vámonos de Fiesta* (Let's Go Party). A native of Nicaragua, Sánchez honed his percussive skills while living in the San Francisco Bay Area, where he paid his dues with numerous local bands. In 1984, he relocated to Honolulu, and soon thereafter established himself as a fine performer throughout the Hawaiian Islands. He formed his own international band (*Salsa Hawaii*) in 1988, and became a local favorite and the recipient of numerous music awards. With several recordings to their credit, Rolando Sánchez & Salsa Hawaii have toured throughout Japan, South Korea, Guam, Tahiti, Canada, Nicaragua, and the West Coast of the U.S. mainland. This new release finds the veteran bandleader at the top of his game, in the company of top caliber players, with commendable arrangements supplied said musical protagonist, in addition to Carlos Peluzza, Edwin Maldonado and Elmer Daza. Featured vocalists include Jules Kam, Marlene Balduenza, Judy Palmeira, Pedro Haro, and Rolando Sánchez. Highlighting the repertoire of original scores are the selections *Vámonos de Fiesta*, *Don't Break My Heart*, and *Yo Te Quiero*. — *Rudy Mangual*



Luis Gonzáles
Si Te Prequantan
[Windows Media
Quicktime](#)

Rolando Sanchez
Vamonos De Fiesta

REVIEWS

LUIS GONZÁLEZ
Tributo a Un Gigante

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[Quicktime](#)

Steve Pouchie

Watch Ur Wallet

[Windows Media](#)
[Quicktime](#)

José Luis Morán

La Rumba del Barrio

[Windows Media](#)
[Quicktime](#)

3D Ritmo de Vida

Que Siga La Rumba

[Windows Media](#)
[Quicktime](#)

Somos Son

Bilongo

[Windows Media](#)
[Quicktime](#)

The Estrada Brothers

Mr. Ray

[Windows Media](#)
[Quicktime](#)

Manny Silvera

Bassed in America

[Windows Media](#)
[Quicktime](#)

Bobby Matos

Cuchy Frito Man

[Windows Media](#)
[Quicktime](#)

Chembo Corniel

Buena Gente

[Windows Media](#)

(Tsunami Records)

A mean, heavy piano montuno, accentuated by a cuatro guitar and anchored by a bass, sets the tone for the rhythmic line of the opening track (*Sí Te Preguntan*), featuring the vocals of Tito González and the impressive arrangement attributed to Carlos Torres. Bandleader/trumpeter Luis González (a Ray Barretto alumni) pays tribute to his former mentor throughout this new production, *Tributo a un Gigante* (Tribute to a Giant), with scores and arrangements crafted in the traditional, hard-edged Barretto style. A brigade of trumpets and trombones adorn all the selections, with arrangements penned by Torres, Ray Santos, Luis "Perico" Ortiz, Oscar Hernández, Tito Rivera and Leni Prieto. Featured vocalists include Roberto Ortiz, Paquito Guzmán, Tito González and Adalberto Santiago, with vocal choruses provided by Pupy Cantor, Henry Santiago and Darvel Gracia. Other special guests in this recording include the likes of Máximo Torres, Piro Rodríguez, Celso Clemente, Angie Machado, Toñito Vázquez, Cachiro Thompson, Charlie Sierra and Kalani Trinidad. Check out the hard-hitting tracks *Sí Te Preguntan*, *Homenaje a Barretto*, *Homenaje a Los Compositores*, and the closing instrumental composition, Chick Corea's *Spain* (with brilliant solos contributed by Luis "Perico" Ortiz, Carlos Torres, Miguel Camilo and Kalani Trinidad). — *Rudy Mangual*



LUÍSA MAITA

Lero Lero

(Cumbancha Discovery)

Luísa Maita displays the modern spirit of Brazil on her solo debut, *Lero Lero* (Brazilian slang for "Hey, what's up?"). Born in São Paulo of European, Jewish, and Syrian/Muslim heritage, Maita embodies the urban soundscape of her native habitat in this particular recording. The sultry and soulful singer reveals a contemporary vibe that is nourished by alternative pop and downtempo electronic music layered over an acoustic foundation that is deeply rooted in Brazilian popular music. Her original scores swing from funky and seductive grooves to intriguing melodies. In the good company of Paulo Lepetit (musical director/bassist /electronic programmer), Rodrigo Campos (guitars, cavaquinho, Brazilian percussion) and trap drummer Kuki Storlarski, Maita delivers a dazzling and progressive sound in this production. Standouts include the selections *Lero-Lero*, *Fulaninha*, and *Alívio*. — *Rudy Mangual*



SUSIE HANSEN

Representante de la Salsa

(Jazz Caliente Records)

Quicktime**Maña**

Tranquilito

[Windows Media](#)[Quicktime](#)**Santiago Ceron**

Besos de Hada

[Windows Media](#)[Quicktime](#)**Johnny Polanco y Su****Conjunto Amistad**

El Gusto de Mi Salsa

[Windows Media](#)[Quicktime](#)**Siempre Salsa All Stars**

Salsa Para Siempre

[Windows Media](#)[Quicktime](#)

Without a doubt, bandleader/violinist Susie Hansen is the hardest-working musician in the Los Angeles salsa and Latin jazz scene. A Chicago native with a classical music background and several engineering degrees from M.I.T., Hansen has been playing salsa and Latin jazz throughout Southern California for more than two decades, honing a unique sound and style. Her latest recording celebrates the 20th anniversary of the Susie Hansen Latin Band and features such founding members as Joe Rotondi (piano), René Camacho (bass), David Stout (trombone), and George Balmaseda (vocals). Eleven tracks of mostly original scores penned by salsa and Latin jazz luminaries translate to a tailor-made product aimed to please the dancers and aficionados. Aside from Hansen's magical five-string violin renditions (plus lead vocals on the selections *Frank Sinatra's Cha-Cha-Chá* and *I Want To Love You*), one finds commendable vocals credited to George Balmaseda and Kaspar Abbo in the remaining tracks. Worthy of note is the percussion section comprised of Jimmy Branly (timbal), Joe de León (congas) and Ricardo "Tiki" Pasillas (bongó). Top picks include the title track (*Representante de la Salsa*), the bilingual timba version of the rock hit *Vehicle* (hereby translated as "Tu Carrito"), and the closing tune called *Y Sigue Pensando*. — *Rudy Mangual*

**TÓMAS R. EINARSSON****Reykjavik Havana****(Blánótt)**

The Icelandic bassist/composer Tómas R. Einarsson is an award-winning musician who has released 15 records, and whose original scores cover multiple fields and genres, including straight-ahead jazz, Nordic ballads, Latin jazz, and poetry. His compositions have been arranged for big band renditions, and DJs from all over the world have remixed his tasty Latin tracks. This special 4-CD box set (titled *Reykjavik-Havana*) was initially released in 2009. It includes three Latin jazz productions by Einarsson — *Kúbanska* (2002), *Havana* (2003), and *Romm Tomm Tomm* (2006), plus a fourth CD titled *Live* (2009), capturing various performances of this talented bassist and his band in Reykjavik, (Iceland), Moscow (Russia), and Havana (Cuba). This is a mandatory CD for all Latin jazz collectors. — *Rudy Mangual*

**VARIOUS ARTISTS****Palenque Palenque****(Soundway Records)**

This new collection of tracks recorded by various Colombian artists covers the sounds of Barranquilla and Cartagena, back in the 1970s and 1980s. This was a period in which the DJs and "picos" (sound systems) started looking to Africa for their rhythmic



inspiration, resulting in the "champeta" sound, a combination of African and Caribbean influences with popular and folkloric Colombian forms. This sound incorporated elements of highlife, soukous, compas and afrobeat rhythms, igniting a musical revolution throughout the Caribbean coast of Colombia. Eventually, this sound was embraced by the local artists and re-energized the region's ancestral African folklore. A total of 21 tracks tell the story of the roots of champeta and what has subsequently evolved into a modern form of Colombian dance music. Standouts include the tracks *Esclavo Moderno* (Manuel Alvarez y sus Dangers), *Pim Pom* (Wganda Kenya), and *Palenque* (Abelardo Carbonó y su Conjunto). — *Rudy Mangual*



PRODUCT REVIEW

By Rudy Mangual

LP's Latest Percussion Instruments

LP-311H LP One Handed Triangle

A business venture that started over 40 years ago by entrepreneur Martín Cohen with a simple set of bongó drums eventually gave birth to LP (Latin Percussion), a distinct brand of instruments. Embracing multiple models, the **LP Music Group** is home to the original **LP** brand of Latin percussion instruments (bongoes, congas and timbales) made for professional percussionists and designed with the highest quality of material and craftsmanship available. The **LP Matador** is designed for the intermediate percussionist or aspiring pro; **LP Aspire** offers quality products at affordable prices for schools and beginners; and **World Beat** houses a collection of hard-to-find percussion instruments from around the world.

Adding to its arsenal of minor percussion instruments are some of the most innovative products developed in recent years, such as the **LP311H One-Handed Triangle**. Winner of the MIPA (Music Industry Press Association) Award for "Best Percussion Product" developed in 2009, the One-Handed Triangle is a small lightweight product suitable to be played with one hand, thus allowing for multi-tasking with the second hand. A durable plastic vessel houses the triangle with a ball-bearing in the middle, which acts as the striker when the vessel is moved. The opening at both sides of the plastic vessel's wider end allows for easy muffling of the triangle sound by using a finger, as customary when playing a two-handed conventional triangle. The sound is amazing and the product is easy to master rapidly. Priced under \$50 (U.S. dollars) this is an excellent tool for the



working percussionist.

LP-PER007 LP Percusso Tambourine

Recipient of the "NAMM Best of Show Award" during the 2010 NAMM Winter Show held in Anaheim (California) in January of the current year, the **LP Percusso Tambourine** was the talk of the show among the drummers and percussionists in attendance. This new and innovative percussion instrument enables the player to produce two discrete tones from a single instrument by utilizing only one hand. The easy-grip Percusso allows the player to have the choice of shaking the lightweight frame for an authentic tambourine tone or depress the direct-touch lever at the top of the grip for a realistic wood block sound. The combinations of both tones, simultaneously and in perfect sync, are endless. A 3-2 clave sound is easily produced by the player's thumb, while the wrist's movement jingles the tambourine, only using one hand. The LP Percusso's gamut of sounds works virtually in any musical setting and/or genre. Its durable lightweight construction and comfortable grip are designed for hours of playing, while meeting the demands placed on today's percussionists to handle multiple sonic duties. Suggested retail price is around \$70 (U.S. dollars).



LP-484 Jim Greiner Shekere

Designed by percussionist and educator Jim Greiner (an advocate of the physical, mental and emotional benefits of playing percussion), this instrument combines old and new technology to create a novel version of the popular West African instrument known as the "shekere" (or "chéquere"). Built from a fiberglass shell (digitally modeled after a natural gourd) and a network of specially designed plastic beads that cover most of the instrument, the Jim Greiner Shekere delivers the realistic bead-on-gourd sound of traditional shekeres. This durable, lightweight and easy-to-handle hand percussion instrument offers amazing sonic advantages from deep low bass sounds generated by hitting the bottom closed-end of the shekere to bright heights produced from the shaking of its weave of netted beads draped around the fiberglass body. In conclusion, the Jim Greiner Shekere is an attractive, durable, and dependable sound-making machine, capable of replicating the feel, look and sound of most traditional gourd-made African shekeres. Suggested retail price around \$175 (U.S. dollars) —
Rudy Mangual



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