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Reviews ⊕⊕⊕

AUGUST 2011 ISSUE

PICK OF THE MONTH

LA SUCURSAL S.A.

Sin Fronteras
(La Trifulca)

Hailing from Barcelona, Spain, La Sucursal S.A. is a salsa orchestra born in the bohemian barrio del Raval, conceived initially by five immigrant Colombian musicians from diverse musical backgrounds who came together on Sundays to hang out, listen and jam to the rhythms and interpretations of salsa dura of the 1960s and '70s, inspired by the music of Ismael Rivera, Lebron Brothers, Sonora Ponceña, Willie Colon, Tito Puente and Joe Arroyo. In December 2005, the band performed for the first time in an underground club of the Raval, marking the genesis of Barcelona's salsa movement. Since then, La Sucursal S.A. (or "La Sucu" as named by its Catalan fans) has become a training ground in Barcelona for salsa musicians from Spain, Europe and the Americas. In 2007, the band released an EP with three original scores (*No Te Puedo Querer*, *La Sombra*, and *La Sangre y La Lluvia*) thus garnering international exposure thanks to the efforts of radio personalities such as DJ El Chino, DJ Pablo Bat, José Arteaga, and DJ Jacoviche. By 2008, La Sucu debuted with *Lo Nuestro*, which includes a version of the popular composition *La Bien Pagá*, selection by which the band pays a double tribute to "la copla andaluza" and the mythical Puerto Rican salsa institution La Sonora Ponceña. Marina "La Canillas," lead vocalist of the popular Barcelona group "Ojo de Brujo" is the special guest vocalist on the selection. From this point on, La Sucu received the respect and acknowledgement of a true salsa band, joining international touring salsa bands performing abroad and nationally.



Cintron Band Live
Human Nature
Windows Media
Quicktime

Vanelis
Como Lo Extraño

This sophomore production by the band *Sin Fronteras* features a more refined ensemble, busting a fresh contemporary sound while remaining true to the traditions of salsa dura. The

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

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

12-member band delivers a lengthy repertoire of 14 tracks, 12 of which are original scores. They cover the Fito Paez composition *Yo Vengo A Ofrecer Mi Corazon*, as well as the Stevie Wonder hit song *Pastime Paradise*. Joining La Sucu as guest vocalists on two tracks are famed salsa soneros Frankie Vásquez and Papote Jiménez. While enjoying most of the selections in this recording, standouts include the tracks *Cuando Mire Tus Ojos*, *Sin Fronteras*, *Asi*, and *No Me Tumbas*. —*Rudy Mangual*

REVIEWS

CANDI SOSA & VICTOR CEGARRA

Guarapo

Con la excepción del estándar venezolano Caballo Viejo, el repertorio del CD *Guarapo* consiste de venerables “clásicos” del cancionero cubano, cuyas apasionadas interpretaciones vocales reflejan el sabor sonero, el carisma guarachero y la sensibilidad bolerística de la cubanísima Candi Sosa, quien debe ser considerada, junto a su compatriota Bobbi Céspedes, como una de las mejores cantantes latinas al oeste del Río Mississippi.

Después de realizar varias grabaciones en solitario, Sosa establece ahora una alianza vital con el talentoso pianista/tecladista venezolano Víctor Cegarra, quien se encarga de aportar (junto a su polifacético paisano, el flautista y vocalista Gilberto Torres) los arreglos pertinentes. Hay que reconocer también la presencia de otros personajes de alto calibre, incluyendo a Rigoberto López (bajo), Alfredo Ortiz (percusión cubana) y a un par de formidables trompetistas (Ramón Flores y Sal Cracciolo), entre otros. —*Luis Tamargo*

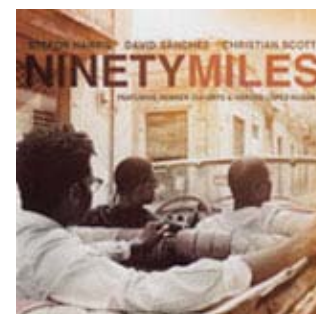


STEFON HARRIS / DAVID SÁNCHEZ / CHRISTIAN SCOTT

Ninety Miles

(Concord Picante)

A group of young lions from North America, Puerto Rico and Cuba call themselves *Ninety Miles*, an experimental masterpiece in the arena of Latin jazz and contemporary jazz modalities. Headed by Stefon Harris (vibraphone), David Sánchez (tenor sax), and Christian Scott (trumpet), this powerful ensemble is reinforced by pianists Rember Duharte and Harold López-Nussa, bassists Osmar Salazar and Yandy Martínez González, plus percussionists Eduardo Barroetabeña, Ruy Adrián López-Nussa, Jean Roberto San Miguel and Edgar Martínez Ochoa. This new order of jazzistas navigate through nine original scores, weaving a colorful tapestry of sounds and musical tendencies from all corners of the Americas with an epicenter in Cuba, the largest of the West Indies islands. Recorded in Havana by José Raúl Varona at Studio 18, Egrem, and mixed by Seth Presant at Village Studios in Los Angeles,



Quicktime**Chembo Corniel**

Buena Gente

Windows Media**Quicktime****Maña**

Tranquilito

Windows Media**Quicktime****Johnny Polanco y Su****Conjunto Amistad**

El Gusto de Mi Salsa

Windows Media**Quicktime****Siempre Salsa All Stars**

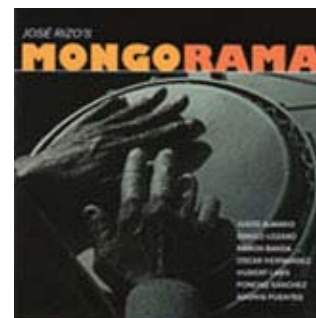
Salsa Para Siempre

Windows Media**Quicktime**

highlights include the selections Ñengueleru, E'Cha, The Forgotten Ones, Congo, and Black Action Figure. By the way NARAS, this is true Latin jazz at its finest! —Rudy Mangual

JOSÉ RIZO'S MONGORAMA**Mongorama****(Saungú)**

After spending ten years as commander-in chief of the “Jazz on the Latin Side All-Stars”, the L.A.-based producer/radio broadcaster/composer/promoter /educator José Rizo decided to explore a different musical path by organizing an equally stellar nonet*, assigned mostly to the difficult task of applying contemporary arrangements (penned by Oscar Hernández and Francisco Torres) to various tunes extracted from the 1960s recordings of La Sabrosa (Ramón “Mongo” Santamaría’s short-lived but pioneering charanga-jazz ensemble), back in his early bandleading years.



The project’s high level of authenticity is ensured by the presence of various artists deeply connected to Mongo’s legacy, including a couple of former Mongo sidemen (Mongorama’s tenorist Justo Almario, and guest flutist Hubert Laws) and the nonet’s own musical director, Danilo Lozano, whose progenitor (Rolando Lozano) had the cojones to introduce the charanga-rooted, five-key wooden flute to the jazz world during his tenure with La Sabrosa. No to mention Mongo’s most renowned tumbadora-playing protégé —the one and only Idelfonso “Poncho” Sánchez, also featured here as guest artist.

“We have all been blessed with Mongo’s musical life”, points out Danilo Lozano, who adds the following comment: “By revisiting this music, we hope that Mongorama can help extend that legacy for generations to come”. —Luis Tamargo

**Augmented here and there with various guest artists (including lead vocalists Freddie Creso and Destany Wolf), Mongorama is basically comprised of Danilo Lozano (flute), Justo Almario (tenor sax), Oscar Hernández or Alberto Salas (piano), Ramón Banda (tímbal), René Camacho (bass), Dayrén Santamaría (violin), Alfredo Ortíz (percussion, vocals), Adonis Puentes (lead vocals), and Joey de León (tumbadoras), the latter of whom manages to recall Mongo’s opulent percussive sound.*

LUCKY 7 MAMBO**Chapter 1****(Lucky7mambo)**

Lucky 7 Mambo was modeled after the traditions of the pioneers of tropical dance music such as The Joe Cuba Sextet and later on Rubén Blades’ Seis del Solar (ensembles with no horns or woodwind instruments), in which the melodies are dictated by



percussion (vibraphone and piano) and vocal lyricism. Fueled by a troupe of accomplished percussionists, including bandleaders Angelo Rodríguez and Joey de León, plus Kevin Ricard and Tito Carrion, Lucky 7 Mambo features the masterful piano of Joe Rotondi and the mallet work of Craig Fundyga on the vibraphone, while René Camacho serves as the bass anchor. Veterans George Balmaseda and Víctor Muñiz front the band with seasoned vocals. This debut recording features a mixed repertoire of original scores by Johnny Crespo (percussionist/vocalist /co-leader of Orquesta Costazul), and several members of Lucky 7 Mambo, plus cover tracks such as *Boco Boco* (composed by Chano Pozo), and *Estás Como Mango* (a Bienvenido Granda composition). Produced, engineered and mastered by Héctor Manuel Rivera with executive producers Angelo Rodríguez and Kevin Ricard, arrangement credits belong to Francisco Torres, René Camacho, Luis Eric González, Joe Rotondi, Angelo Rodríguez and Héctor Manuel Rivera. Guest musicians in this recording include the Crespo brothers (Johnny and Freddie on vocals), and Christopher Holder (keyboards). Favorite tracks include the selections *Colibri*, *El Pai de Don Julio*, and *El Sazón*. —Rudy Mangual



JANE BUNNETT & HILARIO DURAN

Cuban Rhapsody (Alma Records)

Hay ciertas sesiones de duetos instrumentales que han llegado a ocupar un lugar privilegiado en mi extensa colección discográfica, incluyendo a Chiko's Bar (Sivuca & Toots Thielemans), Spain (Tomatito & Michel Camilo), etc. Otra posición prominente será asignada a la reciente alianza de un par de brillantes artistas trilingües*: el pianista habanero Hilario Durán y la flautista/saxofonista soprano canadiense Jane Bunnett.



Con la excepción del armónicamente audaz “New Danzón” de Durán, el material seleccionado consiste de estándares cubanos que han sido elaborados durante los últimos dos siglos por los más emblemáticos autores criollos de carácter clásico o popular, desde Ignacio Cervantes y Manuel Saumell hasta Miguel Matamoros y Abelardo Valdés. Se trata de una sesión alegre y la música fluye placenteramente a través del repertorio, desde el refinamiento melódico de la Danza Lucumí del sobrenatural Ernesto Lecuona hasta la gallardía sonera de Quirino con su Tres (cuyo autor, Emilio Grenet, perdió el brazo y la pierna izquierda al ser agredido por un tiburón en la bahía habanera).

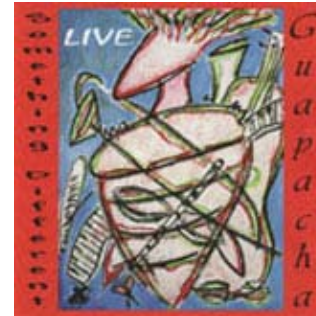
En sus breves pero contundentes “liner notes”, Nat Chediak resalta la importancia del disco: “A juzgar por ‘Cuban Rhapsody’, la fertilización transcultural entre Cuba y Norteamérica no fue interrumpida abruptamente hace medio siglo”. Amen, brother Nat! —Luis Tamargo

*El termino trilingüe se utiliza aquí como referencia a su mutuo dominio del jazz, la música

clásica y los géneros latinoamericanos.

GUAPACHA
Something Different
(Guapacha Productions)

“Guapacha” is a salsa big band under the musical direction of vocalist/flutist Gilberto Torres. Venezuelan native Torres has been an active figure in the Los Angeles salsa and Latin jazz scene for several decades. This debut recording captures the 14-member Guapacha performing live at the Bob Cole Conservatory of Music at California State University of Long Beach, recorded by sound engineer Jesse Hellen-Lloyd and mixed and mastered by Tim Moore at Mas Music Productions. Nine tracks showcase the talents of Torres and his army of musicians via a power-packed set of salsa and Latin jazz favorites including *El Negro Bembón*, *A La Hora Que Me Llaman Voy*, *Paraiso de Dulzura*, plus *On Green Dolphin Street*, *Tive Sim* and *Grooved Pavement*, among others. Sharing vocal duties and choruses with Torres are Gabriel González and Roosevelt Cordova. —*Rudy Mangual*



SILVANO MONASTERIOS
Unconditional
(Savant)

El cuarto disco en solitario del versátil pianista/tecladista /compositor/arreglista venezolano (radicado en Miami desde los años 90) Silvano Monasterios se titula *Unconditional*. Un título que resulta ser sumamente apropiado, considerando la dedicación melódica expresada por el Fourth World Ensemble* a través de un repertorio completamente original (con la excepción del quinto tema, *Sno' Peas*, cuya melodía encantadora se adapta aquí a un ritmo tradicional de gaita zuliana). De hecho, Monasterios logra combinar el chimbangle, otro ritmo autóctono de Zulia, con sus teclados electrónicos en *Black Saint*, la última selección del disco.



Aunque su aproximación pianística se mantiene mayormente dentro de la corriente principal del jazz moderno, Monasterios sirve como agente catalítico al propiciar una amalgama de múltiples elementos estadounidenses (swing, blues, funk, etc.) y diversas influencias iberoamericanas, desde el montuno cubano y el samba brasileño hasta el culo'e puya y el merengue venezolano. —*Luis Tamargo*

**Dicho quinteto también está integrado por Troy Roberts (saxofones), Rodolfo Zúñiga (batería), José Gregorio Hernández (percusión) y el bajista Jon Dadurka, reemplazado este último en un par de temas por el venezolano Gabriel Vivas.*

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