

## NOVEMBER 2009 ISSUE

# Reviews ⊕⊕⊕

## PICK OF THE MONTH

### MARIO ORTIZ ALL-STAR BAND Tributo 45 Aniversario (Sony Music)

Years in the making, *Tributo 45 Aniversario* (45th Anniversary Tribute) pays homage to Puerto Rico's legendary trumpeter/bandleader/composer/arranger Mario Ortiz, Sr. This native of Santa Isabel started performing professionally at the age of 15, working soon thereafter with the best bands in the island. In 1963, he established his legendary orchestra, Mario Ortiz and his All-Star Band, whose debut album, *On The Road*, was followed by a performance at the popular Palladium nightclub in New York City. This was the first time that a band from Puerto Rico headlined at the Palladium (home of icons such as Machito, Tito Rodríguez and Tito Puente). The rest is history, with Ortiz performing for many years at the best venues in Puerto Rico and throughout the Americas, as well as arranging for all the top artists and bands in the Latin music scene. Mario Ortiz Sr. passed away on November 4, 1999. After the funeral, his son, Mario Ortiz Jr., overwhelmed by all the luminaries that came to praise his father, decided that one day he would make a musical tribute dedicated to his progenitor. Recorded in Puerto Rico and Miami, this disc is a result of such wishes. Mario Ortiz Jr. called on the talents of fellow trumpeters Elías Lopes, Tommy Villariny and Luis Aquino; saxophonists Angel Torres, Pedro Rivera Toledo, Frankie Miranda, Ismael Vergara and Sammy Vélez; pianists Papo Lucca, Richie Ray, Rafael Torres, Ricky Rodríguez, Sammy Gali, and Tony Castro; bassists Bobby Valentín, Roberto Pérez, Carlos Rondán, Junior Irrizarry, Raúl Umaña, Freddy Rivera, and Wilmo Rivera; and percussionists Roberto Roena, Isidro Pérez, Celso Clemente, Rigoberto Díaz, and Charlie Santiago. The coro (vocal chorus) was provided by Henry Santiago, Darvel Garcia and Primi Cruz. Lead singers include Gilberto Santa Rosa, Cheo Feliciano, Andy Montañez, Tony Vega, Chico Rivera, Ismael Miranda, Adalberto Santiago, Pedro Brull, Tito



## Streaming Music

**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](#)

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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](#)  
[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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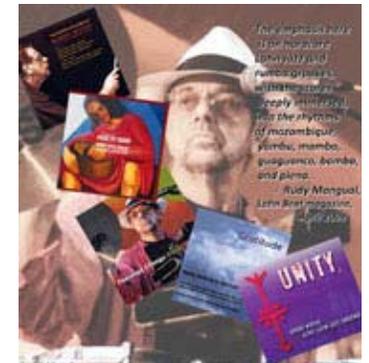
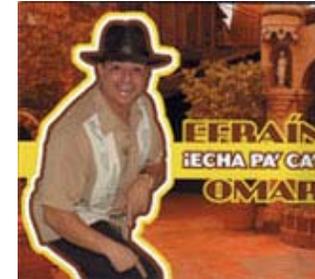


Allen, Bobby Cruz, Primi Cruz, and Anthony Cruz. Favorite tracks include the selections Chinita, Se Acabó El Bembé, Mambo Infierno, and Para Los Bravos. -Rudy Mangual

## REVIEWS

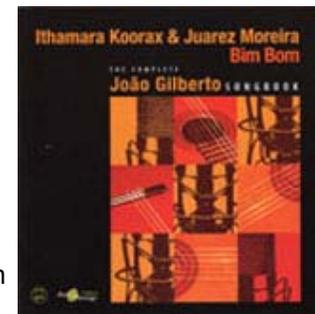
### EFRAÍN OMAR ¡Echa Pa' Cá'! (Efraín Omar Productions)

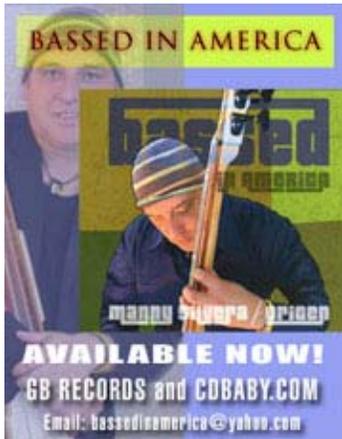
A native of San Juan, Puerto Rico (and currently based in Perris, California), singer/songwriter Efraín Omar delivers his debut production *¡Echa Pa' Cá'!*, after much hard work and attention to detail. Recorded in Villalba, Puerto Rico, under the musical direction of the multi-instrumentalist Ricky Zayas (and with arrangements penned by Luis García, Nino Segarra, Willie Sotelo, Carlos Luna, Ernesto Rivera, and Zayas), this new recording includes ten original scores, nine of which are credited to Efraín Omar. Featured musicians include Marcos Sánchez (piano), Efraín Hernández (bass), Ricky Zayas (horns), Jorge Díaz (trombones) and Javier "Tito" Alvarez (percussion), with Wichie Camacho and Ramón Rodríguez handling the vocal chorus. The selections move with ease in harmonic beauty, full of many elements and forms extracted from the vast arsenal of tropical dance music. Highlighting the production are the tracks *Mi Libertad*, *Esa Mujer*, and *En Las Calles de Nueva York*. -Rudy Mangual



### ITHAMARA KOORAX & JUÁREZ MOREIRA Bim Bom/The Complete João Gilberto Songbook (Motéma)

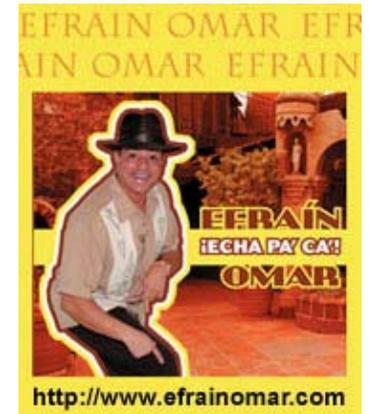
"Como un homenaje póstumo al "Papa de la Bossa Nova", la extraordinaria cantante Ithamara Koorax y el sobresaliente guitarrista Juárez Moreira han grabado el CD *Bim Bom ?the Complete João Gilberto Songbook*, con miras a documentar que las composiciones de Gilberto (mejor conocido por sus aportes como vocalista legendario y cantante innovador) también constituyen un capítulo valioso de su legado musical. A propósito, el tema que sirve de título al disco fue grabado originalmente por Gilberto en el Lado B del histórico 78 RPM que también incluyó (en el otro lado) a *Chega de Saudade*, notificando así el surgimiento de la revolución carioca de la bossa nova. De hecho, este es el primer disco que logra abarcar, por primera vez, todas las composiciones grabadas por Gilberto desde finales de los cincuenta hasta principios de los setenta. Polifacética y políglota, Ithamara Koorax interpreta el memorable cancionero de Gilberto (y su célebre acompañante guitarrístico no se queda atrás). -Luis Tamargo





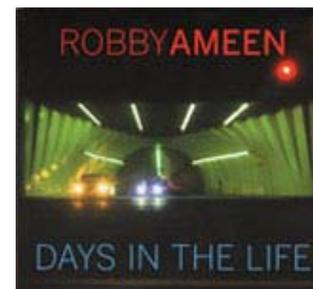
**MANNY SILVERA Y ORIGEN**  
**Bassed in America**  
**(Origen Music)**

Recording CDs these days is a risky adventure, and you really have to love music to undertake such an endeavor. Only the strong (and sometimes wise) survive. Manny Silvera, is definitely a survivor - a warrior of the music business, if you will. *Bassed in America*, his second production as a leader, is an example of real talent on the verge of great things. This is one passionate and majestic effort. The CD features ten well-selected and diversified tracks, opening with *Amigos*, one of my personal favorites, in which we immediately learn that Silvera means business. This is a lush production with an awesome big-band flavor, spiked at times by electric guitar, violin and flute. Other favorites include *Boba*, *Portobelo*, *A Barretto*, *Cosas del Destino*, and *Marañon*. The Panamanian-born Silvera recorded this magnificent CD in Medellín, Colombia (where he grew up), and in Los Angeles, California, where he resides. For the sessions in the City of the Angels, he utilized the services of Artie Webb (yes, the same one from the Ray Barretto organization), Karen Briggs, and José "Papo" Rodríguez. *Bassed in America* fulfills the dream of any seasoned salsaero -it has the style and the deeply missed and needed force of "la salsa de Nueva York." Can't wait for the next one, Manny.-Eric González



**ROBBY AMEEN**  
**Days In the Life**  
**(Two and Four Records)**

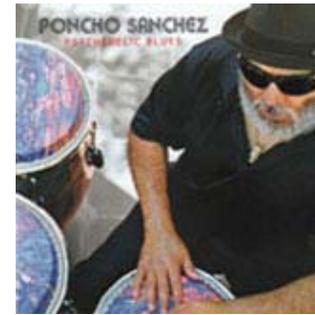
The latest bandleading recording by drummer Robby Ameen finds him in good company with such East Coast road warriors as John Beasley (piano/Hammond B3/Fender Rhodes), Lincoln Goines (acoustic and electric bass), Wayne Krantz (guitar), Richie Flores (congas), Conrad Herwig (trombone), and Brian Lynch (trumpet). Robby Ameen is a veteran musician, perhaps best known for his work with such stars as Rubén Blades and Eddie Palmieri, as well as his accomplishments as leader of his own groups. The repertoire (mostly comprised of original Ameen scores) travels through diverse musical dimensions, exploring the territories of Latin jazz, jazz/fusion, straight-ahead jazz and Afro-world rhythms. Trap drumming at its best sets a solid foundation for all the interpretations on this production. Standouts include the selections 2's & 3's, Una Muy Anita, and Sound Down. -Rudy Mangual



**PONCHO SÁNCHEZ**  
**Psychedelic Blues**  
**(Concord Picante)**



The Los Angeles-based, internationally renowned percussionist/bandleader Poncho Sánchez flashes back to the sounds and modalities of the 1960s and 1970s for inspiration on this new recording, titled *Psychedelic Blues*. Behind his conga drums and vocal mic and fronting his solid, tight band; Poncho opens this psychedelic dance party with the Herbie Hancock classic *Cantaloupe Island* (brilliantly arranged by pianist David Torres), followed by the Freddie Hubbard gem *Crisis* (arranged by trombonist Francisco Torres and featuring guest Arturo Sandoval on trumpet). However, it's the *Willie Bobo Medley* that trumps the production with awesome arrangements by David Torres of the classic Bobo favorites *I Don't Know*, *Fried Neck Bones* and *Some Homefries*, and *Spanish Grease*. Other gems include Poncho's versions of John Coltrane's *Grand Central* and Horace Silver's *Silver's Serenade*, as well as the René Touzet composition titled *Con Sabor Latino*. -Rudy Mangual



## **RICHIE FLORES**

### **Richie Flores**

#### **(Ewe Records)**

Without a doubt, Richie Flores is one of the top conga players in the world. The New York City-based Puerto Rican percussionist is a first-call studio powerhouse, having recorded with the majority of groups and artists that pass through the East Coast's Tri-State area. This production marks his debut as a leader and composer, while displaying his amazing percussive talents, digital speed and musicianship. In the company of two of the top trap drummers in the business-Horacio "El Negro" Hernández (who also produced this recording) and Robbie Ameen? Flores called on the wizardry and talents of pianist Elio Villafranca to help him put this production together. Completing the musical cornucopia are John Benítez (bass and guitar), Iván Renta (sax), and Mike Rodríguez (trumpet). Guest musicians include Dave Valentín (flute on the track *Overjoyed*), Hermán Olivera (lead vocals on *Elena*), Marfil Delgado (lead vocals on *Latin Lover*), and Richie's own father, Saúl Flores (quinto on *La Plena Plenita*). This is an excellent, progressive and experimental recording that transcends much beyond its percussive perspective. -Rudy Mangual



## **EL SSON DE MILDRED**

### **¡Sabroso!**

#### **(Belú)**

Organizada en Medellín por la experimentada cantautora barranquillera Mildred Herrera y su hermano (el cantante/percusionista Ivar Herrera), en conjunction con el talentoso tresero Rogelio Guisao, durante los años 90, la agrupación denominada El Sson de Mildred\* ha logrado atraer



desde entonces la atención de múltiples peritos musicales del país natal de Justo Almario y Carlos Vives. Al contrario de ciertos músicos colombianos que se contentan con elaborar un sonido homogéneo y formulaico (una especie de imitación de la imitación)



que no logra trascender los confines comerciales de la salsa de nuestros tiempos, EL Sson de Mildred ha creado un producto diferente, una combinación singular de la cumbia, el vallenato y el chandé de fabricación colombiana con el son, el bolero y la rumba de procedencia cubana, incorporando a la vez ciertos elementos de la salsa de corte neoyorquino. Debo agregar que el elenco colombiano se enriquece con los aportes de un par de percusionistas radicados en Los Angeles: Joey de León y Alberto López (el último de los cuales también figura como productor).  
-Luis Tamargo

\* Tal denominación se deriva de la forma en que Mildred pronuncia la palabra "son", según el testimonio de Alberto López

## Book Reviews

### THE CLAVE MATRIX

#### Afro-Cuban Rhythm: Its Principles and African Origins

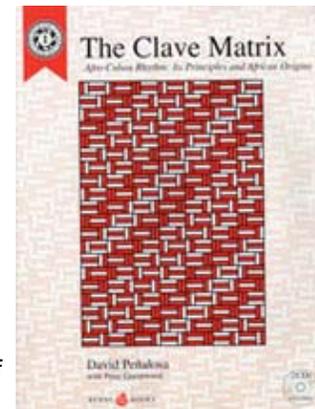
By David Peñalosa with Peter Greenwood

318 pages / English

Bembé Books

ISBN-1-886502-80-3

Known for his work as executive producer for Bembé Records, the percussionist/educator David Peñalosa released his latest published endeavor, *"The Clave Matrix"*. Most music aficionados know that Antillean music is mostly based on the Cuban clave, and Peñalosa a preeminent clave theorist sought out by scholars and authors for his analytical expertise-brings us the definitive book on clave, the rhythmic foundation of most of what it's usually known today as "Latin music". Regardless of your level of musicianship or musical education, this book unlocks the rhythmic secrets of Afro-Cuban music and Latin music in general. Going beyond the conventional teachings of the clave de son (3-2) and the clave de rumba (2-3) patterns, *The Clave Matrix* breaks down the concept of clave and its related complexities to a layman's level of understanding. The book includes extensive exercises, music examples written in standard and box notation, beat cycles, metric structure, terminology and theory. Two CDs accompany this instructional book, providing a vital component to the learning process. The audio examples are identified by the CD icon next to the written exercises, while a shaker plays the main beats on each track, so that you can hear every example within its proper metrical context. Interesting graphic patterns both African-carved and woven, as well as designs by the author based on



traditional motifs, are found throughout the book, thus adding an artistic element which visually communicates, either explicitly or implicitly, the structures found in the music. In reality, The Clave Matrix is the first volume of a series entitled *Unlocking Clave* and based on the research conducted by Peñalosa for over 30 years, on the premise that the essential structure of sub-Saharan African rhythms consists of four independent patterns that intersect according to specific rhythmic principles. As Peñalosa explains it: "In Cuba, those principles are collectively known as 'clave', a Spanish word meaning key or code." The book was edited by Peter Greenwood, a gifted musician/composer /educator/musicologist, as well as a good friend of Peñalosa. -Rudy Mangual

## **RECORDERS IN RHYTHM: CARIBBEAN**

### **Six Inspiring Arrangements with a Latin Flair**

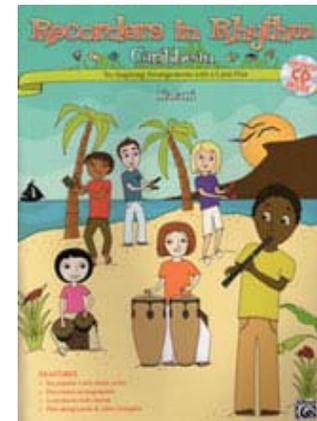
**By Kanali**

**43 pages / English**

**Alfred Music Publishing**

**ISBN: 0-7390-6244-1**

Veteran percussionist/educator Kanali has written and produced over twenty instructional products, including videos, CDs, books and online lessons, bringing music and drumming into the lives of millions around the world. His latest book produced by Alfred Music Publishing introduces students of all ages to the world of percussion instruments and rhythms of the Caribbean through six complete compositions. Featuring lead sheets with chords for the recorder and optional accompanying instruments (such as piano, guitar and bass), percussion arrangements for congas, bongó, cencerro, claves and maracas, and a play-along series of tracks and video examples on an enhanced CD, this multi-media package includes all the instructions required to support both the learning and performance of a small or a larger musical ensemble. The tunes included are *Cha-Cha Chocolate*, *Bolero Dynamic*, *Clavacious*, *Perusing*, *Mambo Suave*, and *Gypsy Abakuá*. Both teachers and students will enjoy playing and improvising on the recorder and percussion instruments within various styles of Caribbean music. Moderately priced, this is an excellent package for any class group, youth group club, organization or even group of friends who come together to make music like any professional group would. -Rudy Mangual



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