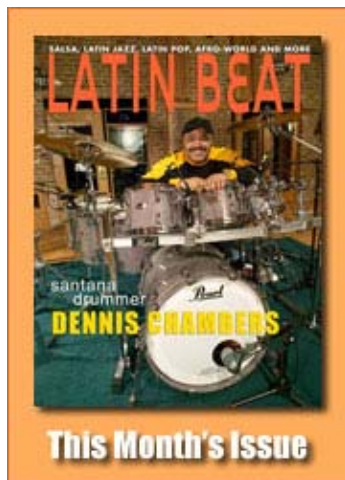




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NOVEMBER 2010 ISSUE

Features ⊕⊕⊕

FROM THE EDITOR

In this Volume 20, Number 9, November 2010 issue of Latin Beat Magazine Online, we celebrate our annual salute to all drummers and percussionists. Drummer Dennis Chambers is our cover feature artist. Chambers is the driving force behind the rhythm section of the legendary Santana band (one of the world's top rock bands). We also look at the annual Watts Towers Drum Festival held at Los Angeles. As always, we will also keep you informed of the most current Latin music news and information available, CD reviews, product reviews, national and international salsa hit parades, calendar of events and our unique regional music columns (Los Angeles, New York, Puerto Rico, and international). Check out our video corner and streaming music tracks. Welcome! ¡Bienvenidos! To the world of Latin Beat Magazine Online ([lmo.com](http://lmo.com) and [latinbeatmagazine.com](http://latinbeatmagazine.com)) Rudy & Yvette Mangual

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Nayibe  
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Luis González  
Spain





[Windows Media Quicktime](#)

**Rolando Sanchez**  
Vamonos De Fiesta  
[Windows Media Quicktime](#)

**Steve Pouchie**  
Watch Ur Wallet  
[Windows Media Quicktime](#)

**3D Ritmo de Vida**  
Que Siga La Rumba  
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**Somos Son**  
Bilongo  
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**The Estrada Brothers**  
Mr. Ray  
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**Manny Silvera**  
Bassed in America  
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**Bobby Matos**  
Cuchy Frito Man  
[Windows Media Quicktime](#)

**Chembo Corniel**  
Buena Gente  
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## Interview with Dennis Chambers

By Glen Moore



*Dennis Chambers has had (and continues to have) a remarkable career in the world of professional drumming. His command of multiple styles is evident, as exemplified by his vast amount of recorded projects with such artists as Santana, Parliament/Funkadelic, John Scofield, George Duke, John McLaughlin, the Brecker Brothers, and David Sanborn, just to name a few.*

*It would not be a stretch to say that a day does not go by without hearing something on the radio in which he has left his indelible drumming stamp. In an industry where "the flavor of the month" is so prevalent, few can truly say that they have stood the test of time and remain in high demand after decades of continued success.*

*Dennis Chambers is one of those few survivors, and it is likely that he will continue to be a highly sought-after. Dennis has also produced many projects on his own. A visit to [www.dennischambers.com](http://www.dennischambers.com) will enable you to experience an interesting journey into the world of a true professional. Dennis is currently touring with Santana, and his busy schedule does not*



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### Santiago Ceron

Besos de Hada

[Windows Media](#)

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### Johnny Polanco y Su

Conjunto Amistad

El Gusto de Mi Salsa

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[Quicktime](#)

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### Siempre Salsa All Stars

Salsa Para Siempre

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*allow much free time, so I felt honored to be able to chat for a while with this talented drummer.*

**Glen Moore: When Dennis Chambers sits back and reflects on his life and career, is Dennis Chambers a jazz, Latin or funk kind-of-guy by nature?**

**Dennis Chambers:** No! I'm just a drummer that loves all styles of music.

**GM: Your current tour with Santana, how is it going?**

**DC:** It's going great. Right now, we are on a European tour; presently in Milan, Italy, and everything is fine. This tour is about great music, great cities, and lots of beautiful people.... I was featured on a recently released Santana CD. It is called Guitar Heaven: The Greatest Guitar Classics of All Time.

**GM: I understand that you are a self-taught drummer. Did percussion just come naturally to you? Why percussion and not the piano or violin, for instance?**

**DC:** For some reason, I just gravitated to the drums. It all started with my mom. She was a singer, and her band used to rehearse at our apartment or at my grandmother's house. Every time the band came around, I would sit there for hours and just watch and listen to her drummer play. After the rehearsal was over, I would pick up anything I could get my hands on, like a butter knife and a fork, for drumming purposes, so my mom noticed that I wanted to play and went out and bought me a drum kit at the age of four. From there, my drum lessons were just listening and playing over records of James Brown, Motown, R & B, soul music. I started playing in nightclubs, at the age of 6, with a band called The Fingertips, and the rest is history, such as James Brown offering me a gig when I was 13.





**GM: Throughout your career you have had the opportunity to work with many great producers. Do you have a favorite?**

**DC:** Yes! Jim Beard and Lenny White, and it's because they have incredible ears.

**GM: Latin music influences?**

**DC:** Dizzy Gillespie, Kenny Dorham, Stan Kenton, Danilo Pérez, Michel Camilo, Eddie Palmieri, Sebastian Schunke, Gonzalo Rubalcaba, Alain Pérez, Irakere, and of course, Tito Puente.

**GM: What is your most memorable experience in the late 1970s and early 1980s chapter of your career?**

**DC:** Playing with Parliament/Funkadelic. What a wild bunch of guys! I would go to bed laughing and wake up laughing from some of the antics!

**GM: Throughout your extensive career as a professional drummer you have had the opportunity to work with many talented artists. Could you describe the most difficult projects, and the most enjoyable ones?**

**DC:** The difficult ones are those when you're working with uptight musicians who can't make up their minds or don't know what they want. The most enjoyable ones are those in which the musicians involved are relaxed and have a lot of mutual trust.

**GM: Latin artists seem to be turning out a lot of great music. Charlie Morgan (Elton John, Orleans) is doing a lot of work with some of Mexico's big artists. Is this part of a resurgence in Latin music's popularity?**

**DC:** I think so. When you listen to that music, it sounds so exciting, it just makes you want to dance! Just thinking about it right now makes me want to dance, and guess what? I can't dance.





**GM: Biggest "I can't believe this is happening" (inspirational) moment while performing live?**

**DC:** At the age of 18, playing a gig with Parliament/Funkadelic at Madison Square Garden, the lights came up, I looked out in the audience and all I saw was a sea of people and they were cheering so loud I could not hear myself counting off, I looked down at my arms and I had goose bumps the size of golf balls.

**GM: What was your biggest "holy @\$%" (embarrassing) moment while performing live?**

**DC:** Playing a gig with Steely Dan, where I misread the set list and counted off another song, and it happened more than once.

**GM: Are you still doing clinics whenever you can?**

**DC:** I don't do that many clinics any more, because I'm too busy doing other things, but sometimes I feel very funny doing them. Sometimes when I do a drum clinic, I think that drummers get the wrong idea about what drumming is all about. For me, being a drummer in a band is about playing some music, it's not about being the fastest in playing all over the place.

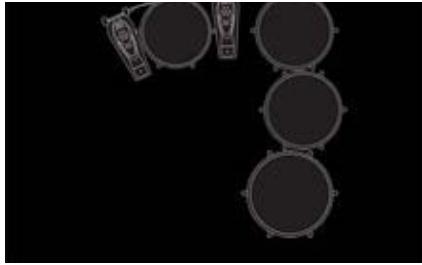
**GM: Looking back, is there one thing that Dennis Chambers would do differently?**

**DC:** Learn how to read music.

**NOTE:** After his current Santana gigs, Dennis Chambers will be conducting a Latin American tour with Scott Henderson and Jeff Berlin that will cover the following itinerary:

- Nov 11-México City, México.
- Nov 12 and 13-San José, Costa Rica.
- Nov 15-Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.
- Nov 16-Quito, Ecuador.
- Nov 17-Guayaquil, Ecuador.
- Nov 19-Santiago, Chile.
- Nov 20-Buenos Aires, Argentina.
- Nov 23 Neuquén, Argentina.
- Nov 24-Córdoba, Argentina.





## Dennis Chambers Pearl Equipment

Reference Series  
Yellow Sparkle  
2005 Santana tour kit

22x16 bass drum  
10x8 tom  
12x8 tom  
13x9 tom  
14x14 floor tom  
16x16 floor tom  
18x16 floor tom  
20x14 gong bass drum  
14x6.5 Dennis Chambers Signature Snare Drum

DR501 ICON front rack  
PCX100 clamp x 4  
B1000 boom stand x 4  
S2000 snare stand  
P2002C double pedal  
H2000 hi hat stand  
TH2000S tom holder x 3  
D1000 drum throne  
CLH100 closed hi hat holder  
AX25L adapter



**The 29th Annual Watts Towers' Day of the Drum Festival  
and the 34th Annual Simon Rodia Watts Towers Jazz  
Festival.**

## Photos and text by Ricky Richardson

The City of Los Angeles' Department of Cultural Affairs and the Friends of Watts Towers Arts Center presented the 29th Annual Watts Towers' Day of the Drum Festival on Saturday, September 25th, as well as the 34th Annual Simon Rodia Watts Towers' Jazz Festival on Sunday, September 26th, 2010. This year's festivals were dedicated to the memory and legacy of Buddy Collette and Vernetta P. Honeywood.

### Saturday's Drum Festival

On Saturday, the festival-goers were able to stimulate their spirits with the pulsating rhythms played by globally relevant drums. A refreshingly nice breeze served as a pleasant addition to this year's line-up. The drum festival got under way with the authentic pre-Hispanic sounds of Mexico, as provided by the Cuauhtémoc Mexica dance troupe, whose performances have always proven to be both entertaining and educational. The troupe consists of several generations of dancers and drummers.

Normally, a drumline is scheduled between two high schools. The crowd was in for a treat with a repeat performance of the drummers from Centennial High School.

Our global journey continued with an imaginary trip to Japan: Taiko Project is an energetic and enthusiastic troupe of dancers and drummers who have a great time while keeping the tradition of taiko drumming alive. The leader of the group mentioned that there are over three hundred taiko ensembles throughout the world.

Our imaginary musical journey continued to West Africa with Balle Fette Bu Senegal. The vibrant, colorful dances and drums of Senegal generated plenty of crowd participation. The rhythms of Balle Fette Bu Senegal proved to be too contagiously enticing for anyone to just sit still throughout their set.



**Fausto Cuevas****Kimberly Mullen**

The crowd and I had our passports ready for our next trip to Cuba. Fausto Cuevas III y sus Compadres spiced up the festival with some truly hot Afro-Cuban rhythms on the tunes titled *Yemayá*, *Buena Noche*, and *Cuenda Congo* (respectively representing the island's Yoruba, Palo and Makuta traditions) before concluding their set with some rumba-guaguacó material. Fausto Cuevas III y sus Compadres is an ensemble comprised of Amilkar Peña, Ismael Pineda, Yosvany Verdecia, Alfredo Ortiz, Santiago Santuiste and Henry Mejías, in addition to dancer Kimberly Mullen.

The final acts of the drum festival featured some amazing legends, including the percussionist Big Black and the Black on Black Environment Rhythms, featuring Zane Musa (saxophones), Joel Scott (keyboards), Del Black (bass), Randy Gloss (percussions), and Paul Allen (drums). Their set opened with a dazzling solo by Big Black. They continued with *Thunder Thumbs*, which was fused with some funk. *Cool Jones* was an excellent straight-ahead tune that allowed everyone to stretch. They concluded their set with a Latin tinged version of *Little Sunflower*, enhanced with a samba beat.

Babatunde Lea, Ndugu Chancler and Munyungo D. Jackson are three much in-demand drummers who took the audience on a dazzling tour throughout the African Diaspora designed to close out the drum festival.

### **Sunday's Jazz Festival**

During the unusually hot autumn Sunday afternoon of September 26, we grooved to the sounds of



jazz at the 34th Annual Simon Rodia Watts Towers Jazz Festival.

This year's jazz festival combined elements of bebop, straight-ahead, and modern jazz, as exemplified by the performances of the chosen line-up: The Harold Land Trio, Indigo, the Babatunde Lea Quintet (featuring Gary Brown, Dwight Trible, Patrice Rushen and Ernie Watts), and the Jazz Mentorship Program's All-Stars (comprised of Patrice Rushen, Ndugu Chancler, Jeff Littleton, Bobby Rodríguez, Benny Maupin, Munyungo D. Jackson and Randy Weston), who took it up a notch for the remainder of the festival.



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