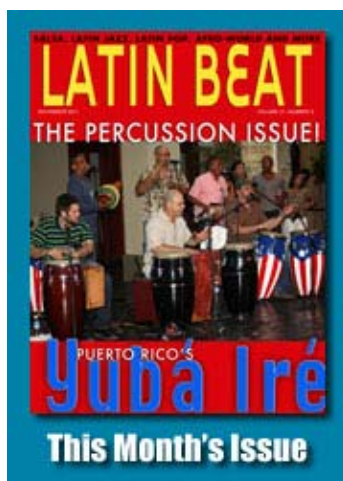




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Columns ⊕ ⊕ ⊕

NOVEMBER 2011 ISSUE

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QUÉ PASA IN LA

By Rudy Mangual

Los Angeles is home to numerous luminaries of Latin music, including dozens of top-gun drummers and percussionists, such as Alex Acuña, Poncho Sánchez, Walfredo "Wally" Reyes, Luis Conte, Joey Heredia, Kevin Ricard, Tiki Pasillas, Richie "Gajate" García, Jimmy Branly, and Ndugu Chandler, to mention just a few. As part of this year's "Percussion/Drum Issue", we have selected a few local road warriors that live to the beat of the drum and keep the Latin popular dance (and Latin jazz) scene alive and kicking in the City of Angels.



Cintron Band Live
Human Nature
Windows Media
Quicktime

Vanelis
Como Lo Extraño
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
Quicktime**



Bandleader/percussionist Bobby Matos was born in the Bronx, New York, surrounded by the classic mambo sounds of Machito and Tito Puente, and the jazz styles of Dizzy Gillespie, Art Blakey, and Horace Silver. Inspired by the musical talents of iconic percussionists Patato Valdes, Cal Tjader, and Willie Bobo, he began a lifelong dedication to mastering Latin jazz. For the past four decades, Bobby Matos and his Afro-Latin Jazz Ensemble have kept alive in L.A. the rich legacy of Latin jazz, considered recently as an “endangered” genre, thanks to the National Academy of Recording Arts and Science (NARAS). In spite of NARAS’ controversial decision to eliminate the Latin jazz category from the Grammy Awards, Matos and his bandmates continue to create new compositions and arrangements, with influences that range from John Coltrane to Orquesta Aragón. They are currently enjoying the release of their critically acclaimed CD “Beautiful As the Moon.”



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



Percussionist Joey de León Jr., a native of Hell's Kitchen in New York City, began banging on drums at the ripe age of three. Tutored by his father Joey de León - an acclaimed percussionist from the 1970s salsa era- and his uncle Vito (who urged him to learn to read music), de León eventually graduated from the prestigious Manhattan School of Music (earning this institution's highest award for "Outstanding Musicianship"). Based in Los Angeles since the early 1990s, he has performed with numerous local salsa and Latin jazz groups, including the Susie Hansen Latin Band, and the guitar duo of Strunz and Farrah. Since 2006, he has been performing with Grammy winner Poncho Sánchez. As time permits, de León also performs with local favorites Lucky 7 Mambo, Mongorama, and Rumbankete, among others.





Percussionist/bandleader Melena was born in Havana, Cuba. Her formal training began on the trap drums as a teenager in Los Angeles, and then she studied Latin percussion with Luis Conte. She also returned to her native country, on several occasions, to study privately with Conjunto Folklorico Nacional de Cuba, as well as percussionists Miguel "Angá" Díaz, Yaroldy Abreu, and José Miguel Meléndez, among others. She has focused her studies on the Afro-Cuban traditions, particularly on the sacred batá drums. Melena has toured, performed, and/or recorded with numerous artists, including Barry White, Stevie Wonder, Julio Iglesias, and Chayanne. She fronts her own Latin jazz and Afro-Cuban Salsa Band, performing at local or national festivals and concerts. Melena is an excellent clinician, always stressing the importance of the history of Afro-Cuban drumming and the knowledge of its culture.



A native of Brownsville, Texas, drummer/percussionist Fausto Cuevas is a graduate of Boston's Berklee College of Music, but also studied with both Giovanni Hidalgo and Horacio "El Negro" Hernández. After graduating from Berklee, Cuevas relocated to Los Angeles, where he currently resides. His résumé includes touring and/or recording with Celia Cruz, Julio Iglesias, Teena Marie,

Cheo Feliciano, Al Jarreau, Tito Nieves, Néstor Torres, and Britney Spears, among many others. Cuevas' versatility keeps him busy, performing with artists and projects ranging from Latin to jazz to pop. He is currently touring with Santana, but when in town, Cuevas works with Johnny Polanco & Conjunto Amistad and many other favorite local bands.

There are many other excellent, active percussionists throughout Southern California, including Luis Cruz Beltran, Giancarlo Anderson, Ramón Banda (Banda Brothers), Ernie Valenzuela, Christian Moraga, Alfred and George Ortiz (Orquesta Son Mayor), Henry Mejías, Walter Rodríguez, Tito Carrión, Víctor Baez, Angelo Rodríguez (Lucky 7 Mambo), Michael Duffy, Alberto López, Steve Haney, Freddy and Johnny Crespo (Orquesta Costazul), Angel Lebrón, Papo Rodríguez, Robertito Meléndez, Ramoncito Ramos, Eddie del Rio, Rubén Ordiano, Leo Román, and Tony Alba, among others.

Support all your local artists and their venues. Peace.



A BITE FROM THE APPLE

By Vicki Solá



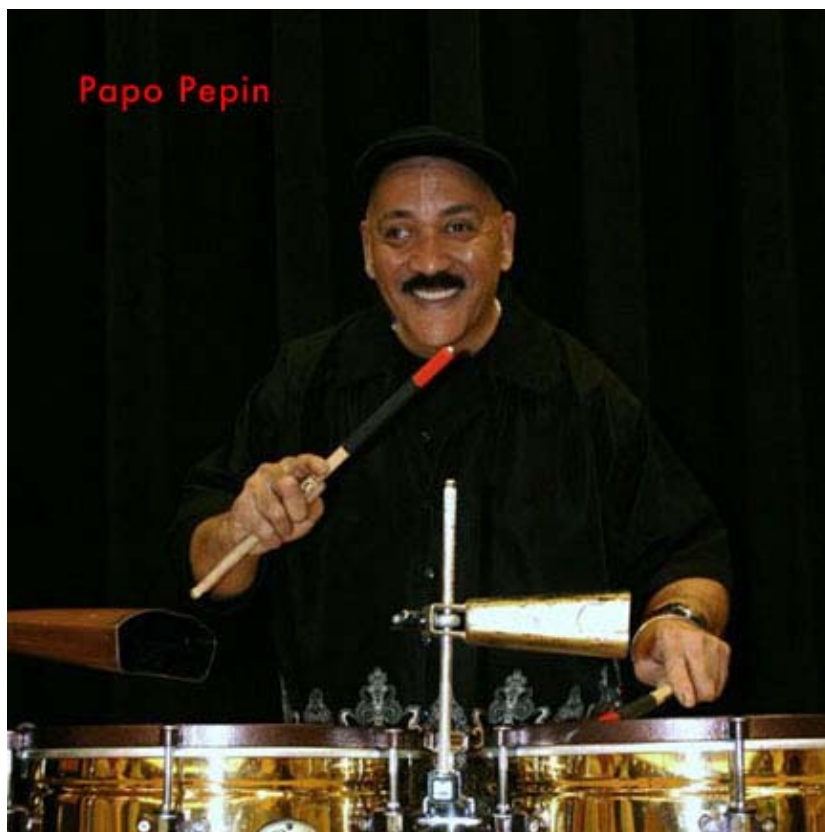


A timbal-playing, Bronx-born nephew of the iconic Puerto Rican poet Julia de Burgos, **Orlando Marín** is celebrating sixty years as a bandleader. In fact, Marín founded his first band at the age of sixteen-Eddie Palmieri and his Orchestra.

Known for hits like "My Mambo" (his own composition, released as a 78 RPM), "Aprende a Querer," and "Se Te Quema La Casa," Marín also recorded the first Latin boogaloo (bugalú) album, "Out of My Mind," and the famous LP "Saxophobia."

A Palladium veteran, Marín is the only bandleader of that era who continues to perform regularly. In 1993, he was awarded a Lifetime Musical Achievement Award in Colombia; and in 1999, he received the Bobby Capó Lifetime Achievement Award from New York Governor George Pataki. In 2006, Congressman José Serrano honored Marín as "The Last Mambo King," for his contributions to the music and dedication to his community as an employment counselor for organizations such as the National Puerto Rican Forum. Marín helped put many young people on the right track.

Thank you, Orlando, for all you have given us, through so many years.





Papo Pepín is another one of Latin music's unsung heroes. Pepín was born in Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico, but his family moved to Brooklyn when he was two years old. A year later, he was keeping rhythm on conga drums, under the watchful eye of his father Toño, who happened to be one of Tito Puente's first bongoceros.

At the age of six, the child prodigy recorded with his father's band, El Gran Combo Darionex. He went on to study at the Music Conservatory of Brooklyn, while performing and touring with his father's bands.

By the age of 13, Pepín was appearing with high-profile artists such as Machito, Kako, and Willie Rosario. After he hit his 18th birthday, Pepín's résumé was be expanded to include work with Tito Puente, Celia Cruz, Charlie Palmieri, Roberto Roena, Bobby Valentín, Rubén Blades, La India, Willie Colón, Víctor Manuelle, Yolandita Monge, Cheo Feliciano, Louie Ramírez, Big Pun, Marc Anthony, and the New Desi Arnaz Orchestra (with whom he performed at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.).

Pepín played on more than 400 recordings, provided percussion for the Africando sessions, recorded on "The Mambo Kings" motion picture soundtrack, appeared in the film "El Cantante" and on The Bill Cosby Show. The first-call master percussionist performed every Sunday, for six years, with the Chico O'Farrill Afro-Cuban Orchestra at Birdland, and opened for El Gran Combo at the recent New York Salsa Congress.

He has released two CDs ("Al Natural" and "Ponte en Vela") and is now working on a third, while leading three bands - Orquesta Yimbaraco, Mambo Swing, and his Latin Jazz Ensemble.

Pepín has also given back to his community by teaching workshops at public schools in the Bronx and Manhattan, offering lectures at Hostos Community College and performing with Ray Santos' orchestra at City College of New York, Manhattan College, and NYU.

You can catch Pepín at various local venues such as SOB's, LQ, Copacabana, and Hudson River Café (where he performs every Saturday evening).

DJ Jeff's "Hot Pick of the Month": Frankie Vásquez's "Niña."





The Hostos Center for the Arts and Culture showcases Zon del Barrio's "Monstritos"/Little Monsters of Rhythm on November 4th and 5th. Attendees can expect to witness the virtuosity of some of the next generation's most brilliant percussionists. "Steeped in Afro-Cuban and Puerto Rican roots," says Zon del Barrio's Aurora Flores, "they explode into the future with salsa, hip hop, and new wave."

Zon del Barrio's young percussive section - Orestes Abrantes, Nelson Matthew González, Jason González, and Kyle Matthews - will trade off on congas, timbal and bongos. Abrantes, who was a guest on my radio program, impressed me not only with his talent but also his maturity (In my opinion, he already demonstrates potential bandleading qualities). It does my heart good to see young musicians poised to carry the torch into the future.

Musical director/arranger/multi-instrumentalist David Fernández, co-founded Zon del Barrio with his wife, the Latin music historian/composer/musician Aurora Flores.

Following their November 4th performance, an after-party is scheduled to take place at the Bronx's Gallery Lounge. Further information is available at www.hostos.edu/culturearts/events.html and www.thegallerybx.com.





Gilberto "Pulpo" Colón, Jr. will be honored as a "Bronx Living Legend" at the Hostos Center for the Arts and Culture on November 19th, from 7:00 to 9:00 P.M. Colón was Héctor Lavoe's pianist and musical director for 16 years, and has performed with "The Big Three" - the New York orchestras led by Machito, Tito Puente, and Tito Rodríguez, respectively. Colón currently leads his own group, Ensalada de Pulpo.

Around town... On the West Gate Lounge's November roster: Típica 73 (Nov. 5), Jimmy Bosch (Nov. 12), Wayne Gorbea's Salsa Picante (Nov. 19), and The Mambo Legends (Nov. 26).

¡Hasta la próxima!



LATIN BEAT MUSIC UPDATE ONLINE

By **Nelson Rodríguez**

This year we have celebrated a few milestones around the world... Cándido Camero reached the age of 90 years, while Eddie Palmieri celebrated the 50th anniversary of his musical career...





Those who are fully immersed in this industry are witnessing huge wave of Latin releases at such an alarming rate that today's existing airplay would have to be significantly increased to bring this new amount of music to the fans. Commercial radio is absolutely uncooperative and unwilling to provide any exposure to the many new Latin musical acts releasing recordings today. Right here in Southern California, we are blessed with the Cuban sounds of Rumbankete, led by trombonist Denis Jirón, with the vocal talents of two of L.A.'s finest - Gonzalo "Chalo" Chomat and Iris Sandra Cepeda. Rumbankete's first CD, "Que No Pare La Fiesta" is a trombone-laced Cuban fest worthy of national and international airplay.

The same can be said of the CD "Como Yo Quería," a new recording led by the veteran trombonist/composer/vocalist Luis E. Seda Ayala, better known as El Maestro Seda, who was part of La Solución in its initial stages. Nino Segarra reunites with Seda on this CD to sing some salsa tracks that can be compared to the material of his first solo release several decades ago.

"Flor de Vida" (Flower of Life) is the latest production by percussionist William Johnson, in conjunction with two L.A. Cuban friends -percussionist Luis Conte and keyboardist/pianist Alberto Salas. What I loved about this CD is how many of the songs were inspired by biblical passages.

Congratulations to Dave Valentín on his Grammy nominated CD, which highlights his long time pianist Bill O'Connell. O'Connell, by the way, has a new CD ("Triple Play Plus Three") that features Richie Flores, Dave Samuels, Dave Valentín and Paquito D'Rivera (also nominated for three Grammy Awards).

Rubén Paz & Chévere Fusion's CD "Amor Virtual" is very different from most of the other recent recordings, as it offers a fusion of trova, salsa, son cumbia, rock, reggaetón, chachachá, timba, conga, danzón, jazz, etc. Its highlights include a couple Rubén Paz's compositions -particularly the tracks "Son Pa'Haití" and "Lucha".

Europe has offered a wealth of Latin releases during the past decade, and one of my favorite European recording artists has been the British pianist Alex Wilson, whose most recent albums have been characterized by their soulful tinge. Alex always features a soul diva on his recordings, and this time around it's Aquilla Fearon who rocks on "Higher Love", as one of the guests who appear on the CD "Salsa Veritas", recorded in London, Madrid and Paris. It contains three Latin jazz tracks, including the one titled "Clumsy Lover," which features Galician bagpipes played by Wilber Calver, a Cuban-born resident of the Swiss Alps.

From France comes Son Del Salón's sophomore release, "El Hombre Mas Feliz". This sextet was formed in 2009 by vocalist Julio David López Pérez, bassist Ken Chikaoui, conguero Thibaut Chipot, vocalist/tresero Anthony Hocquard, trumpeter Julián Hornberger, and bongocero Herve Jacqmin. All the material was written by members of the band, particularly by Jacqmin and Hocquard.

Another band based in France is Grupo Salsafón, whose original material on the CD "Tribute to the Barrio" is combined with some great covers of Eddie Palmieri's "1983" & "Palo Pa'Rumba", Ray de la Paz's "Salsa Pa'l Bailador", Arsenio Rodríguez's "Pa Huele", Tito Puente's "Cuando Te Veas" and Cándido Fabré's "A La Hora Que Me Llamen Voy". The production is an example of how salsa bands in Europe have evolved over the years to compete in other markets.

Calle Facci3n is a third act from France that has recorded a self-titled EP with a reggae-salsa-ska flavor. Its single "La Bendici3n" has been getting worldwide airplay. This septet features Bruno Habas on vocals.

From Berlin, Germany, comes the band Mi Solar, which made its debut in 2008 with "Amistad", and now embraces its audience with a new CD, "Havana Berlin," highlighting the Cuban vocalist Mayelín Guyat, who is also featured as composer, along with trumpeter Jotham Bleiberg and bassist Maïke Scheel. The band's interpretation of Cuban rhythms adds a bit of funkiness that dancers will truly enjoy.

Marco Toro y su Ensemble (led by the Venezuelan Marco Toro) has been working in Holland, Amsterdam for many years, and their latest CD, "Activo En La Jugada", delivers some folkloric tracks and jazzy instrumental tracks, but also utilizes the vocal talents of Marcial Istúriz, Javier Plaza, Angel Flores, Gustavo Gerardo, and Nando Vanin. The band offers a version of Conjunto Libre's "Imágenes Latinas" (sung by Vanin) plus a tribute titled "Recordando a Manny Oquendo" that was originally recorded in 1999 and sung by Javier Plaza.

"Miles Español (New Sketches of Spain)", a collaboration of epic proportions between Spanish flamenco legends and U.S. jazz greats, explores the influence of flamenco on Miles Davis' music by recreating tunes drawn from Miles' "Sketches of Spain" and "Kind of Blue". More than 30 musicians got together to reinvent the music of Davis and elaborate their own compositions, including Chick Corea, Jerry González, Luisito Quintero, Edsel Gómez, John Scofield, Jack DeJohnette, Chano Domínguez, Gonzalo Rubalcaba, Alex Acuña, Ron Carter, John Benítez, Sammy Figueroa, Eddie Gómez, Antonio Sánchez, and Jorge Pardo, among others. The two-CD set was recorded by an incredible cast, including some former Davis sidemen, and is destined to become a historic collector's item.

When I heard **Roberto Quintero** had released his debut I knew it would be a superb recording, as he happens to be a well-seasoned veteran who has played with some of today's best Latin jazz and salsa acts. Quintero's debut CD ("Transmission") features such special guests as Dave Samuels, Luis Perdomo, Alfredo Naranjo, Carlos 'Nene' Quintana, Ralph Irizarry, Héctor Martign3n, Nelson Jaime (Gazú), and Carlitos Padr3n.

Sammy García & El Sabor De Puerto Rico is one of the Borinquen's hottest bands, as proven on the CD "Objetivo", with all the compositions penned by the talented Juan José Hernández Doejo. Props to the two young vocalists, Wilfredo Col3n and Joselito Hernández, who will ensure that this band will be around for a very long time.

Pianist **Alvaro Cabarcas** (better known as Pelusa) leads Pelusa & La Banda Caramba on their solo debut "Escuela de Salsa". This outing should do well with fans of the Grupo Niche sound on commercial radio. John Rivera is the vocal guest on "Oye, Culebra".



DESDE BORINQUEN

Por: **Elmer González**



SONEROS EN LA PLENA. En las pasadas dos décadas el ritmo de la plena ha experimentado un auge en el número de agrupaciones y grabaciones pleneras. Contrario a lo que pudiera percibirse, la plena ha mostrado que no es un ritmo folklórico fosilizado en el pasado sino más bien, una expresión dinámica que sigue buscando espacios para actualizarse y desarrollarse con trabajos y agrupaciones que cultivan desde el sonido tradicional hasta fusiones con el jazz y la rumba cubana.

Este año, la plena logra otro paso adelante en su historia con el trabajo discográfico "Soneros en la Plena" del grupo Atabal. Un junte de figuras que se han destacado mayormente en el mundo de la salsa que se reúnen para interpretar plenas al estilo particular que nos tiene acostumbrado

Atabal.

Héctor Rodríguez Medina, director del grupo, declaró que "la idea es poder llevar la plena a niveles internacionales en países donde los cantantes de este trabajo son altamente conocidos como cantantes de salsa", según dijo en conferencia de prensa celebrada en Viera Discos en Santurce el pasado 12 de octubre.

Uno de los propulsores del proyecto lo fue Andy Montañez quien participa aquí junto a otros "soneros" destacados tales como: Tito Rojas, Jerry Medina, Hermán Oliveras, Luisito Carrión, Wichie Camacho y Víctor Manuelle.

Hay que destacar que este junte no es un "Crossover" de salseros a la plena. Son cantantes puertorriqueños que crecieron escuchando plenas pero sus carreras profesionales se desarrollaron en el contexto de la salsa.

Por esa relación con el género de los panderos y el güicharo, cada sonero se percibe natural, cómodo, inspirado y la música fluye con energía y mucho sabor de plena.

Esa familiaridad congénita con la plena también está presente en las intervenciones que tienen los raperos boricuas VicoC y Voltio quienes le añaden un elemento urbano y contemporáneo a este trabajo sin que sus "líricas" se escuchen forzadas o eclipsen de alguna forma el estilo y el sabor de Atabal y sus invitados.

Complementan este trabajo los cantantes del grupo Caymmi Rodríguez, Chaiki González y el juvenil Juan Pablo Díaz.

A través del tiempo Atabal ha desarrollado un estilo particular, un sonido distintivo que ha logrado mantener sin evadir elementos de innovación. El grupo siempre ha contado con arreglistas que saben darle forma a la visión musical de Héctor Rodríguez y esta vez no es la excepción. Aquí se destacan los arreglos de los maestros Julito Alvarado, Ricardo Pons, Javier Rodríguez Curet, Roberto Jiménez y Angelito Hernández.

Atabal se inició en el 1983 como un cuarteto de percusión y voces con un repertorio de ritmos afrocaribeños. Su primer disco "Del Caribe al Brasil" (1986) fue la carta de presentación de lo que ha sido su trayectoria musical con énfasis en la percusión. Su sonido se ha enriquecido con la participación de otros instrumentos destacándose el cuatro, saxofón barítono, flauta y trompeta, entre otros.

Su discografía la componen también los discos: "Voces y tambores" (1995) "Música Morena" (1999) "Con el ritmo del Caribe" (2004) "Un junte doble A en la navidad" (2009) y "Soneros en la plena" (2011) que desde ya se perfila como uno de los mejores discos del año!



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