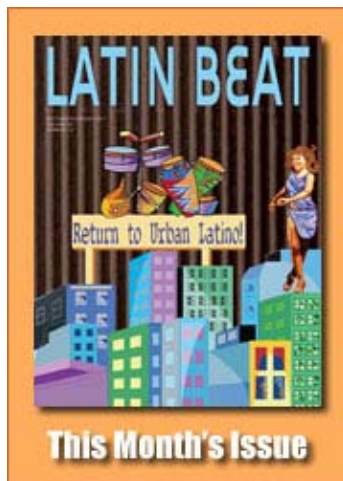




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DECEMBER/JANUARY 2010 ISSUE

Reviews ⊕⊕⊕

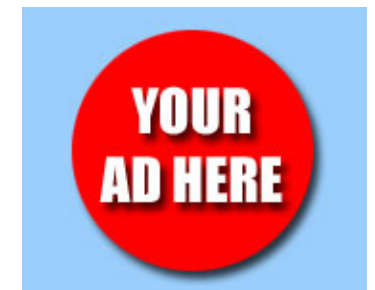
PICK OF THE MONTH

CHUCHO VALDÉS & THE AFRO-CUBAN MESSENGERS

Chucho's Steps

(4 Quarters)

Virtuoso pianist/composer/arranger/bandleader Chucho Valdés reshapes himself on this new production, generating a mammoth musical landscape in the borders of North American jazz, while staying linked to his Afro-Cuban roots. The brainchild of Cuba's Irakere and son of Bebo Valdés, Chucho presents a repertoire of original scores aimed to take Latin jazz to a new plane by rejecting all commercial trends, and routines associated with said genre. Along with his new posse of Afro-Cuban Messengers, Chucho pays homage to jazz icons like Joe Zawinul (master keyboardist and co-leader of the legendary jazz group Weather Report) on the opening track, *Zawinul's Mambo*. The title track is a tribute to John Coltrane, while *Begin to Be Good* blends textural complexities derived from a couple of U.S. standards—Cole Porter's *Begin the Beguine* and George Gershwin's *Lady Be Good*. Chucho and his messengers also pay homage to the Marsalis family on *New Orleans*, a brilliant 4/4 jazz composition with a 6/8 bridge, designed to showcase how Jelly Roll Morton historically transformed ragtime into jazz. Completing this production are the selections *Yansá* (referring to the orisha better known in Brazil and Cuba as *Oyá*), *Julián* (dedicated to Chucho's youngest son), *Both Sides* (fusing double-time rhythms of guaguancó, as well as samba), and my favorite track, *Danzón*, which displays the elegant stamp of Chucho's piano playing, as well as the supreme beauty of this Cuban idiom. —*Rudy Mangual*



Nayibe
Borinquen
Windows Media
Quicktime

Luis González
Spain

REVIEWS

**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
**Windows Media
Quicktime**

Somos Son
Bilongo
**Windows Media
Quicktime**

The Estrada Brothers
Mr. Ray
**Windows Media
Quicktime**

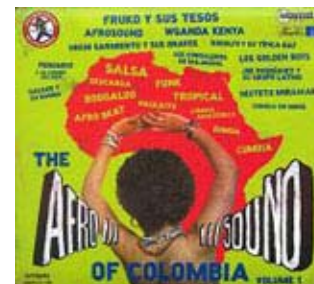
Manny Silvera
Bassed in America
**Windows Media
Quicktime**

Bobby Matos
Cuchy Frito Man
**Windows Media
Quicktime**

Chembo Corniel
Buena Gente
Windows Media

THE AFRO SOUND OF COLOMBIA – VOLUME 1 (Vampisoul)

Colombia es una tierra privilegiada, en todo el sentido de la palabra. Su riqueza natural, folklórica y cultural es infinita e inigualable. Y ni hablar de la variedad preciosa de su gente. Tal diversidad se manifiesta en su música, en la cual la población negra ha dejado sus raíces bien plantadas. *The Afrosound of Colombia* es una jugosa e impresionante colección que documenta la trayectoria de los ritmos negros colombianos, preservados para la historia gracias al catálogo de Discos Fuentes, y traídos a la luz nuevamente por las mentes visionarias del sello español Vampisoul.



Esta importante colección fue recopilada por el DJ Bongohead y el investigador musical Pablo E. Yglesias. La producción consiste de dos compactos, los cuales incluyen 41 muy bien seleccionados temas que cubren la maravillosa geografía musical afrocolombiana—no necesariamente limitada a la interpretación de la salsa—y sus diferentes artistas. Entre mis temas favoritos están, por ejemplo: *Flores Silvestres* (Fruko y sus Tesos), *Sabor* (Sexteto Miramar), *Chenchudino* (Peregoyo y su Cumbia Vacaná), *El Ausente* (Fruko y su Tesos), *Lamento Cubano* (Fruko y su Tesos), *La Cara del Payaso* (Galileo y su Banda), *Tabaco y Ron* (Rodolfo y su Típica RA7), *Salsa con Tabaco* (Afrosound), *La Lluvia* (Fruko y su Tesos), *Descarga Espectacular* (Fruko y su Tesos), *María La O* (Fruko y su Tesos), *El Eco y el Carretero* (Afrosound), *Los Sabanales* (Los Corraleros de Majagual), *Ola de Agua* (Peregoyo y su Combo Vacaná), y *Salsa con Monte* (Michi Sarmiento y su Combo). Otros artistas representados en esta importante colección son Wganda Kenya, Cumbia en Moog, Los Golden Boys, Joe Rodríguez y su Grupo Latino, y Rodolfo y sus Ídolos.

En estos tiempos que vivimos, cuando gran parte de nuestro legado musical está en vías de extinción, ante la apatía cultural que caracteriza a las nuevas generaciones, *The Afrosound of Colombia* aporta una contribución gigantesca e invaluable. Se trata de otro gran acierto del Sello Vampisoul. —*Eric E. González*

LUISITO ROSARIO Casino Rueda (Luisito Rosario)

Initially coming into the salsa scene in 1996 as lead vocalist for the Larry Harlow Orchestra, Luisito Rosario today is an experienced salsa vocalist who continues to perform with Larry Harlow, among other salsa orchestras as well as his own band. His popularity exploded in 1999 when he toured Europe and the USA with Los Hermanos Moreno. In 2001, Luisito recorded his solo debut CD *Jurame*, which showcased his Puerto Rican salsa roots. His sophomore production *Rumba del Barrio* displayed his complete



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**

dominion of singing Latin music taking on charangas, son muntunos, guajiras and old school salsa selections. On this new self-produced production *Casino Rueda*, under the musical direction of Ronnie Amoros, Luisito pays homage to the classic sound of the "New York Salsa Era". The production includes three English salsa arranged tracks including *Nothing's Gonna Change My Love For You* (Glenn Medeiros), *Here I Go Again* (Smokey Robinson and The Miracles), and *Na, Na, Na, Na* (Dale Frashuer/Gary DeCarlo), as well as three salsa romantica tracks and four hard-hitting salsa selections. The title and opening track *Casino Rueda* features the group "Croma Latina" from Italy with arrangements by Tommy Villariny. Other favorites include the selections *La Malanga Brava* (a Joe Cuba composition), and the Alejandro Sanz composition *Corazon Partido* (also featuring the group Croma Latina). —*Rudy Mangual*

SIERRA MAESTRA**Sonando Ya****(World Village)**

A pesar de que la música cubana resurgió explosiva y poderosamente gracias al fenómeno del Buena Vista Social Club (BVSC), pocas grabaciones cubanas de corte tradicional (pero no relacionadas a ese histórico movimiento) han sido distribuidas o promovidas en los Estados Unidos. Y no ayuda que la revolución causada por BVSC ya se ha ido disolviendo. Sin embargo, existen aún casas disqueras que reconocen el valor de tan importante tradición, que se arriesgan a invertir en la distribución de música tradicional cubana. En este caso, me refiero a World Village, sello responsable por el lanzamiento del candente y exquisito CD *Sonando Ya*, la más reciente producción del célebre grupo Sierra Maestra.

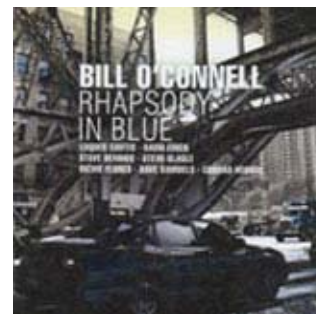


Como es bien conocido, Sierra Maestra es una de las pocas agrupaciones que todavía interpreta y preserva el son en su forma auténtica. *Sonando Ya* sigue esa histórica línea, con trece poderosos temas que cubren diversas variantes soneras. El compacto abre con el número titulado *Pal' Monte*, cuyo dinámico sabor matancero se deriva de la labor dual del trompetista Yelfis Valdés. El resto de los números reflejan el sabor conjunero (caracterizado por la utilización de una sola trompeta), con la excepción del tema *¡A Tí, No Te Sale!!*, el cual cierra el compacto. Disfruté mucho al escuchar el son montuno *Un Toque de Bembé*, la guaracha *No Me Guardes Rencor*, el changüí *Juan Andrés* y el son *La Vida Sin Ti*. Pero aquí hay dos, en mi opinión, principales joyas musicales: el sabroso y penetrante son montuno *Perdona mi Traición* (donde se luce Emilio Ramos en el tres) y *Sangre Negra*, descrita como una "fusión", con explosivas descargas de conga (Eduardo Rico), tres (Ramos) y trompeta (Valdés).

Cabe destacar que el personal de este suculento compacto también incluye a Carlos Puisseaux, Alberto Valdés, Luis Barzaga, Eduardo Himely, y Alex Suárez, miembros originales del legendario grupo. Y con los cambios musicales que se están dando en Cuba, son ellos y los que les siguen quienes van a mantener vigente el son en toda su expresión autóctona. Nuestro apoyo a ellos se mantiene eternamente y sin condiciones. —*Eric E. González*

BILL O'CONNELL**Rhapsody in Blue****(Challenger Records)**

Perhaps better known to Latin jazz buffs as Dave Valentin's pianist, Bill O'Connell is a native New Yorker who studied classical music at The Oberlin Conservatory of Music. He has worked with Latin and jazz legends including Mongo Santamaria, Chet Baker, Sonny Rollins, Gato Barbieri, The Fort Apache Band, Jon Lucien, Kenny Rankin, Astrud Gilberto, and Dave Valentin, among others. O'Connell has seven solo recordings as a leader with his 2001 release *Black Sand* climbing to #5 on the national jazz radio chart.



This new production *Rhapsody in Blue* finds a seasoned mature pianist, composer and arranger in O'Connell at the peak of his career. His mastery of the ivory keys is astonishing as well as his musicianship. He's blessed with the ability to shift seamlessly from playing a Cuban montuno to swinging to any form of jazz in a flash. He's indeed fluent in both genres and in all their offsprings and spin-offs. Players in the recording are Luques Curtis (bass), Steve Berrios (drums), Steve Slagle (saxophones), Dave Samuels (vibes), Conrad Herwig (trombone), and Richie Flores (percussion). A repertoire of mostly original scores and a few standards (including the Gershwin title track) make this a Latin jazz gem you must have in your collection.

—Rudy Mangual

MIGUEL MAMBO WITH CÁRTE-BLÁNC**Soul of Mambo****(El Mambo World Music)**

First generation Puerto Rican, born and raised in Lorain, Ohio, Miguel "Mambo" De León started his musical career as a percussionist performing with Orquesta Charambo (a band that worked alongside and backed many of the Fania Records artists that traveled through the state of Ohio in the 1970s). Since the early 1980s, Miguel "Mambo" calls Kansas City, Missouri home and is proud of being the keeper of the flame that keeps Latin jazz and salsa alive in this area of the Midwestern states. For the past 20 years, he has been working with UMKC Conservatory of Music jazz students in a Latin jazz project. This recording is the outcome of the efforts of Miguel "Mambo" and several of his students. Titled *Soul of Mambo* "Pasiones del Alma", this self-produced recording features a total of seven original scores composed by Paul Shinn (piano), Patrick "Alonzo" Conway (percussion/vocals), and Steve Lambert (sax/flute). Completing the ensemble are Julian Alpizar on bass and Miguel "Mambo" on timbal, vocals and musical direction. Jesús Negrón appears as guest musician in the recording featured on auxiliary percussions and vocals. Standouts in the production include the



selections *El Diesel*, *Puntualidad* and *Tu Tienes Carta Blanca*. —Rudy Mangual

KAKO AND HIS ORCHESTRA

Live it Up

(Fania/Código)

La historia de la salsa se ha enriquecido con coproducciones o combinaciones memorables de alto nivel cualitativo: Johnny Pacheco con Pete Conde Rodríguez o con Héctor Casanova; Willie Colón con Héctor Lavoe, Rubén Blades, Celia Cruz y otros; y Richie Ray con Bobby Cruz; por mencionar algunas. Pero hubo otra pareja explosiva que dejó lo suyo: Francisco "Kako" Bastar y Camilo "Azuquita" Argumedes, y una de sus iniciales muestras exitosas es el contagioso álbum *Live It Up*, el cual fue editado originalmente en 1968 por el sello Musicor, y ahora está disponible en formato de disco compacto, remasterizado digitalmente por la marca Código.



Live It Up apareció inicialmente en el momento apropiado, en una época de transición musical en Nueva York. El boom de la salsa estaba cocinándose y a punto de explotar, mientras que los sonidos híbridos del Latín boogaloo (o bugalú), shingaling, jala jala y Latín soul, etc, aún se mantenían vigentes. Lo cual justifica la gran variedad estilística de los diez temas de *Live It Up*, empezando con la succulenta rumba-guaracha *Aunque No Tengo*, cuyo festivo coro dice así: "Aunque no tengo dinero, yo bailo bugalú". Otros temas favoritos son el guaguancó *La Chica del Barrio Obrero*, y la emotiva guajira *Lo Que Sea*. Es significativo escuchar también a Kako ejecutando un académico solo de timbal en el número titulado precisamente *A Golpe de Timbal*. Cabe destacar la participación del cantante y productor Bobby Marin, quien interpreta vocalmente el número que sirve de título al disco. —Eric E. González

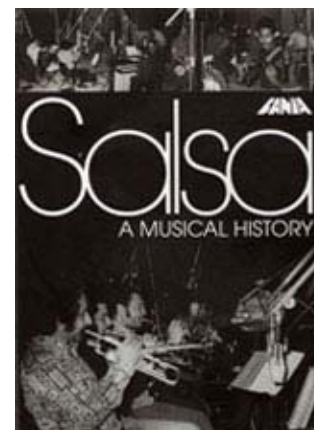
SALSA: A MUSICAL HISTORY

Various

(Código Music/Fania)

La música que conocemos como salsa tiene ciertamente una historia interesante que nunca me ha dejado de fascinar. A pesar de que la misma tiene raíces que se remontan a muchos años antes de lo ocurrido en Nueva York (léase boom salsero de los 1970s), lo que allí sucedió es, en efecto, lo que me atrajo definitivamente a los ritmos afrocaribeños. Y aunque ya ha ocurrido una explosión de libros enfocados en la presunta historia de la salsa, siempre ha hecho falta un documento sonoro que nos guíe de la mano, paso a paso, a través de la evolución de la salsa en Nueva York, resaltando cómo nació y cómo murió.

Con el advenimiento de los llamados "box sets" (cajitas que contienen varios compactos acompañados por pertinentes libritos



representativos de dicha época: *Ven Devórame Otra Vez* (Lalo Rodríguez), *Juguete de Nadie* (Puerto Rican Power), *No Vale la Pena* (Ray Sepúlveda, Johnny Rivera), *Detalles* (Oscar D'León) y *Lluvia* (Eddie Santiago). El personal encargado de esta producción obtuvo los derechos de estos temas, pues los mismos no forman parte del catálogo de Fania y sus afiliados. Sin embargo, el susodicho catálogo está representado en este cuarto compacto por *Me Voy pa' Morón* (Fania All-Stars), *Sola Vaya* (Sonora Ponceña), *Aquí el Que Baila Gana* (Fania All-Stars) y *Ritmo en el Corazón* (Celia Cruz y Ray Barretto), entre otros. La colección también consta de un librito que narra brevemente la historia de la salsa, y describe cada tema seleccionado.

Como dije anteriormente, estoy seguro que esta antología sonora no va a satisfacer a algunos fanáticos, debido a algunos huecos que estoy seguro encontrarán, incluyendo la presencia o ausencia de algunos temas. Pero este es un trabajo importantísimo, considerando que en estos cuatro compactos se resume un periodo primordial en la historia de la música afrocaribeña (llámese salsa, si se quiere). Esto para mí es un sueño hecho realidad, y estoy contento que Código Music haya dado continuación a la creación del original. Estoy seguro que más proyectos similares vendrán con el tiempo. —Eric E. González

VINYL CORNER

By Rudy Mangual

BIO RITMO

45 RPM vinyl recording

A-Side, *Dina's Mambo*

B-Side, *La Muralla*

Electric Cowbell Records

Founded in Richmond, Virginia, in 1991 by Puerto Rican vocalists/minor percussionists Jorge Negrón and Rei Alvarez, plus local rocker Jim Thomson as an Afro-Latin drumming ensemble, Bio Ritmo quickly evolved into a new old-school salsa band with the addition of musicians Gabriel Tomasini (congas), Giustino Riccio (timbal), and Bob Miller (trumpet). With almost two decades in the business now and fans worldwide, Bio Ritmo decided to release this 45 RPM vinyl recording in anticipation of its next full-length production. The 7" vinyl includes the selections *Dina's Mambo* (composed by the group's keyboardist Marlysse Simmons), and *La Muralla* (composed by trombonist Tobias Whitaker and Rei Alvarez).

Dina's Mambo is a funky instrumental ditty by Bio Ritmo showcasing Simmons keyboard savvy and the band's more eclectic side, somewhat reminiscent of the 1970s sounds of groups such as Mandrill, and Joe Bataan's Salsoul period. *La Muralla* is a straight up salsa dance track arranged in a minor key mode, like right out of the soundtrack of a south-of-the-border Tarrantino B-movie.



This dark gothic feel is what makes this score special and in-sync with the nostalgic lyrics and interpretation by Alvarez. —*Rudy Mangual*

LUIS RESTO

Combo de Momento

12" LP 33 RPM vinyl recording

Side One: Effigy, Olivia, Olivia Bop

Side Two: Maybe, Cold Heart, We Called it a Day

Resto World Music

Born and raised in Detroit, Michigan to Puerto Rican parents, Luis Resto started his musical career as a keyboardist, but soon thereafter became one of the most successful hip hop producers in the business. His credits include working with Eminem (winning an Oscar for co-writing *Lose Yourself*), The Game, 50-Cent and Tupac Shakur. This new recording as a leader *Combo de Momento* is available on 12" LP vinyl as well as on CD format and downloads. This is neither a hip hop nor a Latin music production by Resto. It's a music production showcasing the wide and unlimited musical spectrum of Resto's talents as a bandleader, composer, arranger, pianist, keyboardist and vocalist. The scores vary from rock to popular musical veins to jazzy and Latin-tinged rhythms. Side One features three studio recordings with Resto playing piano, keyboards and on lead vocals in the company of Paul Nowinski (acoustic bass), Mario Resto (guitar/timbal), and Keith LeBlanc (drums), among others.



BOOK REVIEWS

LEGADO PUERTORRIQUEÑO EN HOLLYWOOD: FAMOSOS Y OLVIDADOS

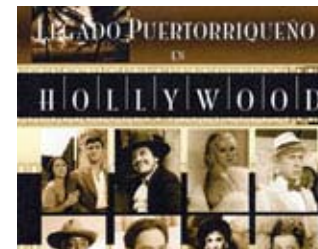
By Miluka Rivera

175 pages/Spanish

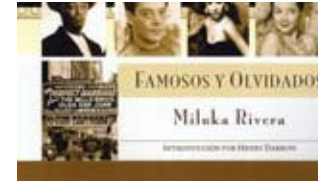
Lulu Publishing Company

ISBN-978-0-578-06993-7

Actress/activist/writer Miluka Rivera brings us her latest endeavor, "Legado Puertorriqueño en Hollywood: Famosos y Olvidados" (Puerto Rican Legacy in Hollywood: The Famous and the Forgotten). In the making for more than 19 years, this book brings to light the contributions of Puerto Rican actors to the U.S. cinema industry, as well as Broadway. Through numerous interviews and biographies (plus hundreds of photographs), Rivera unfolds the saga



of her early peers in both Hollywood and Broadway, thus presenting evidence of their presence, which dates back to the "silent movie" era. Written in seven parts, the book starts with a historic time-capsule section, followed by the chapters covering the early silent movie epoch; "Hollywood's Golden Era"; cinematography of the '40s, '50s and '60s; the evolution of Latin American cinema; biographies of pioneering Puerto Rican actors, and Puerto Rican Grammy recipients. The book also touches on cinema made in Puerto Rico and México, while highlighting legendary talents such as Alberto Morín, Blanca de Castejón, Perry López, Sammy Davis Jr., Evelyn del Rio, Diosa Costello and Olga San Juan, etc, in addition to Puerto Rican actors featured in North American television programs of the 1960s and 1970s, such as Tony Orlando, Freddie Prinze, Erik Estrada, Henry Darrow, Hector Elizondo, and Lisa Mordente, among others. Actor Henry Darrow (best known for his role as "Manolito Montoya" in the television series "The High Chaparral") wrote the introduction to this excellent and informative book. —*Rudy Mangual*



NEW WAVE LATIN GUITAR

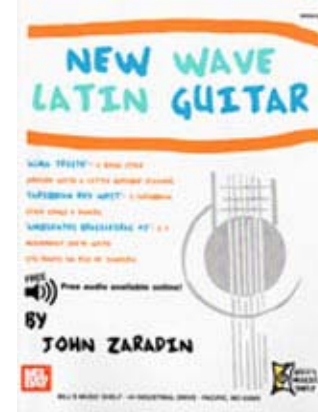
By **John Zaradin**

44 Pages/English

Mel Bay

MB99233

From the good people of Mel Bay (publishers of instructional music books and music charts for all instruments) comes this new guitar book titled "New Wave Latin Guitar" and authored by guitar virtuoso John Zaradin (leader of the group "Images of Brazil"). This instructional book includes both music notations and guitar tablature staff so that fingering and fingerboard positions can be easily cross-referenced. It contains the selections *Alma Triste* (a bossa style prelude with a bit of a baroque flavor), *Caribbean Key West* (including five Caribbean-style songs and dances), and *Ambientes Brasileiras #2* (a three-movement suite with roots in Rio de Janeiro). A free on-line accompanying audio recording of all the charts in the book is available to enhance the learning process, while allowing the player to appreciate the appropriate feel of the songs. *Rudy Mangual*



PRODUCT REVIEWS

By **Rudy Mangual**

LP522T-AWC LP Classic Top-Tuning 11" Quinto

LP559T-AWC LP Classic Top-Tuning 11 ¾" Conga

LP552T-AWC LP Classic Top-tuning 12 ½" Tumba

While the basic manufacturing design of the conga drums (tumbadoras) has evolved very little in the last few decades, with advances limited mainly to the use of new types of woods for the body and the utilizations of synthetic skins for the heads, the **LP Comfort Curve Rim** is the latest innovation of said percussion instrument. The Comfort Curve Rim allows for hours of pain-free playing, thanks to its innovative curved rim design, which has eliminated the sharp, straight traditional rims previously used in all conga drums which made by LP and other drum manufacturers.



LP's new **Series Top-Tuning Congas** bring the latest innovation to the design of today's modern conga drums. LP's designers and craftsmen have created a system that allows a conga drum to be tuned from the top, without having to turn the drum, lift it out of its basket, or remove it from its stand. This new tuning system allows easy and immediate access to all tension bolts on the conga drums (similar to timbal and trap drums), eliminating situations where only the nearest bolts to the player are accessible for tuning in a harried live situation. This new system aids in eliminating uneven tuning of the drum heads, while enhancing a better fundamental pitch of the instrument. It also prevents premature bending of the rims and extends the life of the heads.

While this new "LP Top-Tuning" system will be available on most of LP's conga drums, it premiered on the LP Classic Conga series model (a favorite of most professionals).

The **LP Classic Top-Tuning Congas** feature beautiful 30" tall Siam Oak shells in 11", 11 ¾", and 12 ½" diameters heads, with a clear finish, which accents the look of these elegant drums and their natural rawhide heads. A new modified "Comfort Curve II" steel rim houses the new Top-Tuning system via five thematically designed V shape recessed ears (on the quinto) and six ears on the conga and tumba drums, to ensure hand comfort and extended playability. This new system provides a direct pull on each tension bolt for better tuning control via its fitted hex head, which can be turned with a standard socket (available in any hardware store), in case the included tension wrench is ever misplaced.

While the LP Classic Congas have always been the choice of many professional percussionists due to their unique sonic performance and construction quality, these new "Top-Tuning" models are destined to revolutionize the market and the design of future conga drums. —Rudy Mangual

Suggested retail prices are:

LP522T-AWC LP Classic Top-Tuning 11" Quinto \$649.00

LP559T-AWC LP Classic Top-Tuning 11 ¾" Conga \$669.00

LP552T-AWC LP Classic Top-Tuning 12 ½" Tumba \$699.00

PRO.MARK FC3 Millennium II Rumbero Timbal Sticks



Developed by the Texas-born percussionist Fausto Cuevas (currently with Stevie Wonder and previously with Britney Spears, Al Jarreau, Roy Hardgrove, and such Latin legends as Celia Cruz, Julio Iglesias, and Cheo Feliciano, among many others), the new **"Pro.Mark FC3 Millennium Rumbero Timbales Sticks"** are made of American hickory and designed primarily for playing the timbal. The sticks measure 16 ½" in length, with a diameter of 0.485", featuring two-rounded ends and a 6-inch "natural" grip area, as per Cuevas' design. The remaining 10 ½" length of the stick is lacquered for players that prefer this particular finish. An all-around Latin percussionist/drummer who currently resides in L.A., Cuevas finds himself playing numerous percussion instruments (from hand drumming to sticks and mallets) on numerous occasions. This motivated him to design his "FC3 Rumbero Timbales Sticks Autograph Series", based on the mind-set of the working Latin percussionist, who multi-tasks on just about every gig. He indicated that on certain occasions, after playing congas and other hand drums for several hours, his fingers would swell up slightly, making it somewhat uncomfortable to pick up a ½" or larger in

diameter timbal and/or drum stick to play timbal or other stick percussion instruments. That's why he opted for the 0.485" diameter stick, in order to gain a more comfortable grip and for the 16 ½ inch length to compensate for the stick's striking force. The sticks are well-balanced, and I really liked the option of having a natural or lacquer grip area available by simply turning the sticks. The Fausto Cuevas "Rumbero" model sticks are sold in a 2-pair package. —*Rudy Mangual*

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