

Discography - Hilario Durán



Encuentro en La Habana - Alma Records, 2005

"This album was recorded in Cuba on the 25th and 26th of February 2005 at the EGREM Studios in Havana. To record again with the former members of one of Cuba's most ambitious musical projects was long a dream. For years we all performed together as the band for Grammy Award-winning trumpet player Arturo Sandoval. When Arturo moved to the United States, we renamed the group Perspectiva, evolving a new musical perspective."



New Danzon – Alma Records, 2004

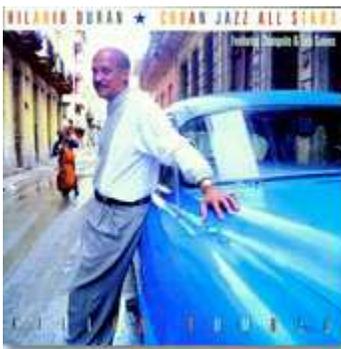
2005 Juno Winner for "Contemporary Jazz Album of the Year"

The Hilario Durán Trio, comprised of Cuban-born Durán, renowned Canadian bassist, Roberto Occhipinti and Grammy award winner, Cuban-born percussionist Horacio 'El Negro' Hernandez, have taken the wonderful classic Cuban music called Danzon to new heights. The result is New Danzon, a fresh and vibrant Latin jazz offering, which melds the traditional with sophisticated be-bop and technical musical mastery.



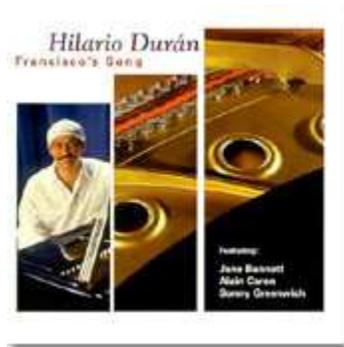
Habana Nocturna - Justin Time, 1999

"Habana Nocturna's roots in Cuban music are Guillermo Rubalcaba's Charanga Típica de Concierto and the trailblazing danzones composed by Cachao and Macho López for Arcaño y sus Maravillas. In jazz, the Gonzalo Rubalcaba paid tribute to his father's music in 'Mi Gran Pasión' (1987). But Durán's Habana Nocturna is a round-trip ticket from Cuban music to jazz, and back; a landmark album of Cuban Jazz in the nineties." Nat Chediak (author of "Diccionario de Jazz Latino"), April 1999



Killer Tumbao - Justin Time, 1997

"After making a name for himself as a primarily jazz oriented pianist... Hilario Durán returns to Castro country for this energetic get-down with an all stars cast of Cuban greats. 'Killer Tumbao' is a pounding collision of Latin roots and jazz elegance, as much heady folklore as swing." Matt Galloway, Now magazine (Toronto), May 1997



Francisco's Song - Justin Time, 1996

"Durán, the latest keyboard sensation from Cuba to draw attention... is a fiery performer whose debut disc is just out - and hot. On 15 tunes, with Jane Bunnett, bass Alain Caron and guitarist Sonny Greenwich, there's powerful, chord-packed interpretations as Cuban and North American traditions are pulled together, the title track quite brilliant and jazz faves Giant Steps, Lush Life and Hot House amazingly fresh."
Geoff Chapman, The Toronto Star, June 1996



Havana Remembered - Somerset Entertainment, 2001

Savor the joyful spirit of Old Havana with this collection of songs from the golden era of Cuban Music.

Club Mambo	(Solitude)	2000
Buscando Cuerdas	(Egrem)	1994
Tiembra Tierra	(Egrem)	1990
Los de Siempre	(Egrem)	1978
La Gran Timba del Caribe	(Egrem)	1978
Habana 9 pm	(Egrem)	1976

With Jane Bunnett:		
Spirits of Havana	(CBC-Egrem-Messidor)	1992
Rendez-vous Brazil-Cuba	(Justin Time)	1995
Havana Flute Summit	(Naxos)	1996
Chamalongo	(EMI-Blue Note)	1997
Ritmo+Soul	(EMI-Blue Note)	2000

Habana Nocturna - Justin Time, 1999

Credits

Hilario Durán - piano
Jane Bunnnett - flute and soprano saxophone
Marie Bérard - violin
Larry Cramer - trumpet
Steve Dann - viola
David Heatherington - cello
Horacio "El Negro" Hernández - batá drum and drums
Hugh Marsh - violin
Roberto Occhipinti - acoustic bass
Rodolfo Valdés Terry - congas



Tracks

1. U.M.M.G. - Upper Manhattan Medical Group - 6:08
2. Autumn Nocturne - 4:54
3. Drume Negrita - 8:04
4. Harlem Nocturne - 8:28
5. Esto Sí Tiene Que Ver (You Must See This) - 6:31
6. Moonface (Habana Nocturna) - 8:02
7. Lada 78 - 8:43
8. Song For Argentina - 9:52
9. Like Someone I Love - 7:03

Liner Notes

What becomes a legend most? Since the beginning of the Golden Age of Cuban music in the thirties, people the world over have been enthralled by the music and musicians emanating from that tiny speck of an island in the Antilles. First, it was the son montuno and its practitioners, from Miguel Matamoros to Ignacio Piñeira. In Antonio Machin's voice, Moisés Simon's "The Peanut Vendor" takes New York by storm. The rumba follows in close pursuit, finding its way into the top big bands of the era. Its ambassadors are Cuban émigrés like Mario Bauzá, who makes a name for himself as musical director for Chick Webb and Cab Calloway.

In the forties, Bauzá joins brother-in-law Machito in a big band - the Afro Cubans - that cuts across the tangled Manhattan ethnic divide. By the end of the decade, the Latin dance turf is shared with two Titos, Puente and Rodríguez, both of Puerto Rican heritage. With the able assistance of percussionist and showman extraordinaire Chano Pozo, Dizzy Gillespie brings jazz into the mix. Cubop is born. Chico O'Farrill starts writing Afro-Cuban jazz.

The scene shifts to Mexico in the fifties, where pianist/bandleader Pérez Prado launches his brassy, sexy mambo amidst a bevy of foxy rumberas. Back in Havana, producers both Cuban (Ramón Sabat) and American (Norman Granz) record tasty jam sessions with Julio Gutierrez, Peruchín, Cachao, José Fajardo, and Bebo (father of Chucho) Valdés. Singer Beny Moré brings the son to maturity with his gifted improvisations in a big band context. He succeeds in eclipsing most everyone in his wake.

Moré's reign is far-reaching, if short-lived. He passes away in 1963, taking the glory days of the Big Band Era with him. Salsa becomes the sound of Latin Manhattan in the mid-sixties. Whereas in Havana, Armando Romeu succeeds in establishing the Orquesta Cubana de Música Moderna, breeding ground of first-rate soloists like Paquito D'Rivera and Arturo Sandoval. The two of them,

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led by another OCMM alumnus, Chucho Valdés, will rewrite the course of Latin Jazz in the seventies with their fusion ensemble, Irakere.

Buoyed by the success of Irakere, other Romeu disciples go it alone. Juan Pablo Torres updates traditional Cuban music with Algo Nuevo. Hilario Durán attempts a fusion of his own, less rooted in the Afro-Cuban polyrhythms of Irakere. In "Los De Siempre", Durán seeks to expand the harmonic range of Cuban music. His avowed musical references - Peruchín (Cuba's answer to Monk) and Chick Corea - hail from both sides of the Atlantic. However Irakere casts a very long shadow, leaving no room at the top.

Shortly after D'Rivera's defection to the U.S. in 1980, Sandoval decides it's time to branch out on his own. He makes Durán an offer he can't refuse. The Havana-born pianist will spend the eighties as the trumpet virtuoso's pianist and musical director. A position of such visibility can be a springboard to a successful solo career. But Sandoval's band is not a collaborative affair. Durán and company are there to frame (and keep up with) the trumpeter, not to stand out on their own. In 1985, at the Havana Jazz Festival, Gillespie takes twenty-something pianist Gonzalo Rubalcaba under his wing. Meanwhile, another keyboard wizard, Emiliano Salvador, will spend the last years of his brief life in perfect anonymity.

It is only after Sandoval follows D'Rivera's steps to the U.S. in 1990, that Durán sets out to form another band of his own, Perspectiva, with remaining bandmates and others. It's still a fusion group, but one that is synthesizer-heavy, closer to popular music than to jazz. Havana at the beginning of the nineties is hardly the place to look for cutting-edge pop. Los Van Van and NG La Banda have seen better days. Durán and Perspectiva languish until Jane Bunnett arrives on the island to record her first landmark session of Afro-Cuban folkloric music and jazz, "Spirits of Havana". It's the first of seven albums Bunnett and Durán will make together in the nineties.

Durán turns forty-two, days after recording his first solo outing, the minimalist gem "Francisco's Song" (1995), where jazz meets Cuban music with the piano as the only percussion instrument. A splendid calling card, it wins him a following among the initiated. "Killer Tumbao", recorded almost two years later, is a loose Havana jam session with Canadian pals (Jane Bunnett, Larry Cramer, Roberto Occhipinti) mixing amiably with Cuban all-stars, young and old.

"Habana Nocturna" showcases Durán's talent as an arranger. The band is a jazz ensemble with a string quartet that provides the orchestral shadings and on three occasions actually becomes a charanga (the Cuban traditional string and flute formation). It's a classy, trans-cultural proposition.

"Upper Manhattan Medical Group" becomes a guaracha, "Like Someone In Love" a danzón, "Autumn Nocturne" is recast in ritmo macuta, a Cuban cousin of Brazil's baião and Puerto Rico's bomba. The legendary cradle song "Drume Negrita" seamlessly shifts locales from Havana to Harlem, while "Harlem Nocturne" makes it a fun-filled, round-trip excursion. Durán's own "Moon Face (Habana Nocturna)" goes through three tempo changes, from 6x8 afro to reggae and finally to straight-ahead. It's a mini lesson in (acoustic) jazz fusion of the highest order.

Not every tune is a hybrid. Durán's "Esto Si Tiene Que Ver" is as classic a danzón as they come. Bunnett's "Song From Argentina" is one of the loveliest jazz ballads of the nineties.

The elegance of the writing is anything but conservative. Listen to "Lada 78", a barnburner dedicated to the Russian car he inherited from Sandoval. Ladas are notorious clunkers, but in Cuba, a set of wheels is worth its weight in gold. Who would have thought the man had a madcap sense of humor? Hilarious Hilario.

As featured guest, Bunnett continues to develop along parallel lines. On flute, her Cuban phrasing is on the money: her timing belongs to jazz. On soprano, she summons from a timeless melody its fullest expression, a reminder that jazz is more than improvisation. When she and Durán join forces, it's a relay conversation among best friends: one begins where the other leaves off, gaining eloquence and intensity as they challenge one another and swing merrily along. Their

musical partnership is one of the most rewarding in Latin jazz since Claudio Roditi locked horns with D'Rivera in the mid-eighties.

Rounding out the ensemble, Larry Cramer brings a touch of Miles Davis to "Drume Negrita" and draws lovely circles around Bunnett in "Song For Argentina". El Negro displays his versatility riding the cymbals gracefully or doing cascara (keeping time on the side of the snare or timbal) like the Old Masters. On bass Roberto Occhipinti steps out in "Drume" and "Song". Second violin Hugh Marsh solos wisely on "Lada 78" and "Like Someone". On congas, Rodolfo Terry is a very able timekeeper.

At heart, Durán is a classisist. Every tune has its own intro, a nod to Erroll Garner, one of his father's favorites. Durán Sr. (he's also Hilario) was a rising star of the filin movement that brought Cuban song closer to Nat King Cole and the Great American Ballad. Durán Jr. is said to be an introvert, but you wouldn't know it from his playing, which is in the grand Cuban tradition, but informed by an arsenal of fresh and witty, well-developed ideas. In "Autumn Nocturne", he quotes from "Stormy Weather", Ravel's "Bolero" and "Salt Peanuts" in a single, seamless phrase. Baden Powell's "Canto de Ossanha" finds its way from Brazil to "Song From Argentina". Elsewhere, Durán will tag for good measure.

Apparently, introspection also gives way to euphoria. The pianist/arranger/composer has found a second home in Toronto with wife and daughter Yailen (who does all three voices in the chorus of "Esto Si Tiene Que Ver"). If the music is any indication, he is one very happy camper who won't let the good times go. "Lada 78" comes to a natural close not once but twice, only to keep going. The album fades out as Durán rides his tireless montuno into the sunset. "Like Someone I Love", indeed.

Habana Nocturna's roots in Cuban music are Guillermo Rubalcaba's Charanga Típica de Concierto and the trailblazing danzones composed by Cachao and Macho López for Arcaño y sus Maravillas. In jazz, Gonzalo Rubalcaba paid tribute to his father's music in "Mi gran pasión" (1987). But Durán's "Nocturna" is a round-trip ticket from Cuban music to jazz and back: a landmark album of Cuban Jazz in the nineties.

As the genre approaches the new millennium, Rubalcaba has successfully crossed over to the mainstream. About the only thing that Chucho Valdés won't do is take a break. The late bloomer comes of age: Durán won't be denied any longer. His Habana may be Nocturna, but it shines brightly with a light of its own.

Nat Chediak (author of "Diccionario de Jazz Latino" - SGAE, 1998)