

LATIN

LATIN BEAT

TOP 20 ALBUMS

NEW YORK SALSA	TEXAS POP
1 HOMENAJE A BENNY TITO PUENJUE (Tico 1425)	1 JURO QUE NUNCA VOLVERE LUPITA D'ALESSIO (Orfeon 021)
2 LA COMEDA HECTOR LAVOE (Fania 522)	2 JOE BRAVO IS BACK (Freddy 1085)
3 ESTO SI ES LO MIO ISMAEL RIVERA (Tico 1428)	3 TU NOMBRE GADETS DE LINARES (Ramex 22)
4 INCONQUISTABLE DIMENSION LATINA (TH-2040)	4 NUMERO 8 LOS TIGRES DEL NORTE (Fama 564)
5 SPANISH FEVER FANIA ALL STARS (ICL 35336)	5 ESPECTACULAR JUAN GABRIEL (Pronto 1036)
6 NEW YORK CITY SALSA ORQUESTRA BWAY (Coco 140)	6 A LA INSPIRACION DE JIMENEZ CHELO (Musart 1238)
7 EDDIE PALMIERI (Epic JE-35523)	7 LO NUEVO DE CARLOS GUZMAN (Falcon 5016)
8 SABOR SENTIMIENTO Y PUEBLO ISMAEL MIRANDA (Fania 530)	8 BESITOS LOS HUMILDES (Fama 560)
9 LA CHARANGA 76 EN EL 78 CHARANGA 76 (TR 139X)	9 EL PARRANDERO AGUSTIN RAMIREZ (Freddy 1095)
10 A LA CARTE MONGO SANTAMARIA (Vaya 74)	10 TARDES DE MI VIDA RIGO TOVAR (Mericana/Melody 5610)
11 SALSA ENCENDIDA TIPICA 73 (Inca 62)	11 ELLA VINO AL VALLE FREDDY FENDER (GCP 141)
12 EN LAS VEGAS EL GRAN COMBO (EGC 015)	12 LA VOZ RANCHERA CHELO (Must 10638)
13 TREMENDA DIMENSION DIMENSION LATINA (Velvet 8012)	13 ENTRE AMIGOS CAMILO SESTO (Pronto 1034)
14 ONLY THEY COULD HAVE MADE THIS ALBUM CELIA CRUZ/WILLIE COLON (Vaya 66)	14 A MIS 33 ANOS JULIO IGLESIAS (Alhambra 38)
15 THE ARTIST JOHNNY PACHECO (Fania 503)	15 SUNNY AND THE SUNLINERS (Keylock 3028)
16 SALSA MAYOR (Velvet 8011)	16 VIDIA MIA IRENE RIVAS (Cara 004)
17 MACHA MUMBA SAOCO (Salsoul 4117)	17 A PESAR DETODO VICENTE FERNANDEZ (Caytronics 1526)
18 DOS CACHO (Salsoul 4115)	18 VAMOS A LA ESCUELA CEPILLIN (Orfeon 16010)
19 EXPLORANDO LA SONORA PONCENA (Inca 1060)	19 FELICIDADES RUBEN NARANJO (Zarapa 1126)
20 MUSICAL SEDUCTION BOBBY VALENTINE (Francis 106)	

LATIN PICKS

QUISIERA SER — Jose Jose — Arcano DKL1-3420 — Producer: None Listed

Multi-talented singer Jose Jose scores again with another sparkling album that consists of a collection of love songs as only he can perform them. He has recently been acclaimed as the best ballad singer in Mexico, and here, he demonstrates why cut after cut. Likewise, the orchestra backing him in this album is superb. The songs are beautifully suited to his style, with excellent string arrangements. Another hit for Jose Jose.



CON CARINO PARA TI — Sonora Santanera — CBS-Mexico-DCS-858 — Producer: Federico Mendez

Sonora Santanera has been regarded as a legend in salsa music in Mexico for sometime. On this remarkable album most of the cuts are slow moving boleros, merengues, son montuno and mambos. The vocals are superb. The orchestra is very tight, except for one number called "Dondo" in which the clave beat is out of meter. The arrangements are great and there are a few good solos by the piano player.



LA ORQUESTA DE MI TIERRA — Sonora Poncena — Inca-1064 — Producer: Papo Lucca

Sonora Poncena has had a couple of supporting credits to their name. The group has been considered to be one of the top sellers in Puerto Rico and United States and in this album they demonstrate their music ability. Orchestrations by Papo Lucca are superb. Female vocalist Yolanda Rivera sounds like a young Celia Cruz. A good horn section and tight rhythm makes this album a masterpiece of contemporary salsa.



"Keep your eye on Ruben Blades because he is going to transform salsa." This comment was made by one of the best discoverers of new talent in the Latin music field, **Cheo Feliciano**. And his words again have proven to be true — Ruben Blades is turning salsa around.

Ruben was born in Pueblo Nuevo, Panama. His early musical influence came from his parents, his mother was a singer, his father a percussionist. However, aware of the hardships of a musical career, Ruben's parents insisted that he follow other directions. It was to please his parents that he



Ruben Blades

enrolled at the National University of Panama to study law. In 1974, Ruben graduated from the University, a full-fledged lawyer, and went to work at the National Bank of Panama as one of its attorneys.

In 1972, while visiting the island of Puerto Rico, **Richie Ray** and **Bobby Cruz**, two top Latin musicians from the island, brought Ruben Blades to the attention of **Fania Records**. Ruben was offered a contract although there was no immediate opportunity for him to record. In 1974, with a law degree and all his legal cases taken care of, Ruben decided to come to New York in order to find out once and for all if he could make it in the music field. Nobody knew him musically so his services weren't required by the established bands in New York and Fania Records wasn't yet prepared to record him. But he remained confident of his possibilities and decided to hang around. He took the only thing that Fania Records could offer him at the time: a job in the mailroom of the biggest salsa recording company in New York.

Some of the artists in the company that were aware of Ruben's talents felt he shouldn't be doing this kind of job, but Ruben felt it was necessary to do this in order to stay in touch with what was happening at Fania. He recalls philosophically: "Young kids who are starting out should realize that a lot of times you have to spend time doing things you don't want to do in order to get the things you want."

And what Ruben wanted came at Fania's mailroom door one day in the person of **Ray Barretto**. Ray was looking for a new singer for his band and asked Ruben to audition for him. Ruben was hired right away. He recorded four songs on Barretto's new album, two of them his own compositions "Canto Niche," and a slow bolero, "Eso Es Amar."

In 1976, Ruben saw his opportunity to team up with **Willie Colon**, whom he had known since 1969. Their first LP, "Metiendo Mano," was the beginning of a mutually satisfying and successful partnership. That LP was recently awarded a #1 award in the trade publications.

Ruben's desire to upgrade the material that was being written for the Latin field led him to pursue a composing career on his own. Consequently, many recent Latin hits

have been written by Ruben Blades. He is highly admired by his own peers, who are anxious to record Ruben's tunes. **Ricardo Rey** recorded "Guaguanco Raro," **Ismael Miranda** recorded "Cipriano Almenteros," **Amor Pa' Que**, and "Las Esquinas Son," **Bobby Rodriguez Y La Compania** have had hits with "Numero 8" and "What Happened."

Ruben is serious about his role as a composer. "There's been too much copying of old Cuban numbers for too many years. In order for music to progress, it has to develop in the minds of the artists. A lot of heavy names have kept the levels of our minds in the same direction for years and years." Ruben feels that a song doesn't have to sacrifice its musical excitement in order to be socially relevant, as evidenced by his own hit tune, "Pablo Pueblo."

No Formal Training

Never having had any formal training in music, Ruben's understanding of the musical process is amazing. He views the total picture, in the context of cultural development, and as such as he tackles the difficult task of writing lyrics. And his lyrics are truly inspirational. Ruben himself is still surprised at the public's reactions to the words of his songs. But he knows that through lyrics salsa can become a truly folk idiom by expressing the true message of its time and place. "Our music has always been applied to dancing and rightfully so. My contention is that you can also make it educational and reflect the realities of today. Unfortunately, most of the themes of our music deal with unknown qualities. . . I would like to expand the concepts of music."

A very private man, Ruben Blades is not given to the flashy stage costumes that characterize other performers. Especially as a **Fania All-Star**, Ruben is emphatic about the fact that he is going on stage to sing, not to put on a fashion show. The enthusiastic reception by his fans proves him right once more. His easily flowing melodies and flexible songs are exciting; his understanding of the rhythmic phrase, how to play around with it, how to make it more interesting, makes him a giant in the Latin field. And despite all the outrageous costuming and glitter on the stage, Ruben's vocal glitter steals the show.

In the future, Ruben feels he would like to act and make movies — the acting bug that bit him in Panama when he performed "West Side Story" has not quite left him. But his first love was and always will be music.

ray terrace

BMI Opens In P.R.

NEW YORK — BMI has opened up a licensing department branch in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Carlos M. Vasquez will direct operations of the office, whose prime territory also includes the Virgin Islands.

BMI/San Juan is located in Suite 905, Pan Am Building, 225 Ponce De Leon Ave., Hato Rey, Puerto Rico.

SALSA'S SALSA LATIN RECORDING

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(201) 947-8067