

THE NEW

LATINO\$: AMERICA'S INVISIBLE GIANT

LATIN N.Y.

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SANTANA:
SEXY, DISCO
ROCK

WARRIORS
HEROS OR DEMONS?

**SALVADOR
DALI:**
THE MAD
SAVIOUR

ORQ.
BROADWAY
"NEW YORK'S
CHARANGA"

PUENTE
WINS GRAMMY
AND PROVES HE'S KING
AT RADIO CITY

SIEMBRA
A NEW
FORCE IN
SALSA



PEDRO NAVAJA

A COMIC STRIP
NOVELA



FROM THE BRONX

**ANGELA
BOFILL**
A NEW STAR
IS BORN

ARMONIA DE PUERTO RICO
HECTOR CASANOVA
PRIMER CARNAVAL DEL
MERENGUE
Y MUCHO MAS



THE
NEW

LATIN NY

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WHATS HAPPENING?

YOUTH CRUSADE HAS JOBS

Youth Crusade is a group of citizens interested in the mental and physical well being of our youngsters. Their services include summer tutoring coordinated by a certified teacher who administers tests to determine the reading and math level of kindergarten through sixth graders, then assists them according to their individual needs. A program to train parents on how to tutor is also available. Recreational activities for children ages 6 to 15 are scheduled Monday through Friday, and for young adults on the weekends. Their "Olympic Games" cover baseball, paddleball, swimming, track, soccer and others—trophies and all. Presently they have 180 summer jobs available for anyone between the ages of 14 and 21 who wishes to apply.

The dedicated staff works very hard to offer these programs to our community. So make sure you stop by or mention it to someone who may benefit from them. Youth Crusade is located at 234 Willis Ave., Bronx (138th St.). Information: Mon. to Sat. from 1 to 7 P.M. (except Weds.) at 665-3265 or 292-6034.



LOUIS FALCO WHAT A DANCER

The Louis Falco Dance Company opens at City Center March 27 - April 1 (131 West 55th St., New York, N.Y.). The Associate Director and principal dancer, Juan Antonio, is premiering his new choreographed work "Brahms."

This dynamic Latino has attracted

rave reviews from dance critics in every city, including New York's Clive Barnes who wrote: "Simply one of the most exciting male dancers in the world," and *Dance Magazine's* Amanda Smith: "Falco's style is...casual, spontaneous, racy, often impertinent, and undeniably vital." Need we say more? Check him out.



NOBODY DOES IT BETTER: WILLIE AND RUBEN

It should surprise no one that Willie Colon and Ruben Blades broke all attendance records, including the one established by Celia Cruz and Johnny Pacheco, when they made their first appearance at the Corso in New York, Thursday, March 8th. Of course, it helped that Hector Lavoe was also appearing that night at the Corso, and what more could anyone want than the three sexiest men in Salsa at that Latin party palace, the Corso! The previous record had been set by Celia and Johnny three years ago.

CORRECTION PLEASE

The credit for last month's concert in Puerto Rico photos should have read: Photos by Carmen Mojica—not Molina. Our apologies to Ms. Mojica.

PEDRO NAVAJA

Por la esquina del viejo barrio lo vi pasar,
con el tumbao que tienen los guapos al caminar.
Las manos siempre en los bolsillos de su gabán,
pa' que no sepan en cual de ellas lleva el puñal.
Usa un sombrero de ala ancha y de medio lao,
y zapatillas por si hay problemas, salir voliao.
Lentes oscuros, pa' que no sepan que esta mirando,
y un diente de oro que cuando ríe se ve brillando.

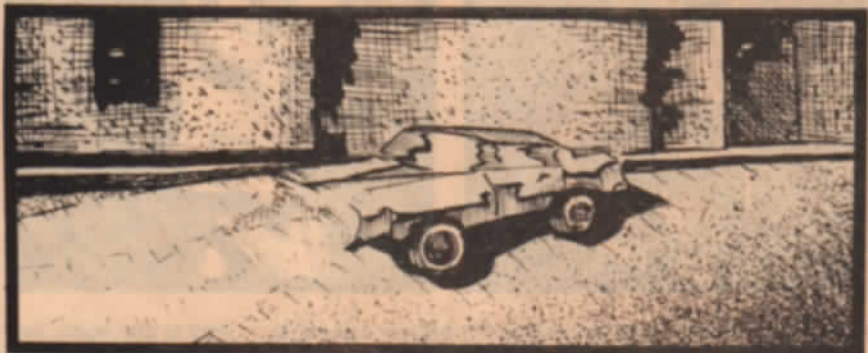
*From a corner of the old barrio, I watched him pass,
With the careful step of the hippest cat, not slow, nor fast.
Into the pockets of a suede leather jacket, his two hands fade,
So nobody knows which of the pockets carries the blade.
At night he sports a wide brimmed hat tilted at the tip,
And Pro Keds sneakers so if there's a problem, he can split.
Tinted shades so nobody knows just where he's looking,
And a golden tooth, shining as he laughs, that lights up Brooklyn.*



LYRICS: RUBEN BLADES (translation: Adela Lopez) ART: RICHIE VASQUEZ

Como a tres cuerdas de aquella esquina una mujer
va recorriendo la acera entera, por quinta vez.
Y en un zaguán entra y se da un trago, para olvidar,
que el día esta flojo y no hay clientes pa' trabajar.
Un carro pasa, muy despacito, por la avenida,
no tiene marcas peros to's saben que es policia.
Pedro Navaja, las manos siempre dentro del gabán
mira y sonrie y el diente de oro vuelve a brillar.

Three blocks or so from that old corner a working chick
Scans the sidewalk for the fifth time in search of a trick,
And enters a storefront and downs a drink to erase this day,
When not one single client, paying for playing, came her way.
Down from the avenue, a car slips past doing twenty tops,
Has no marks, but the people know it's just the cops.
And Pedro Razor, his hands still deep in the pockets of his coat—how fine!
He looks and laughs and his golden tooth glints an uptown shine.





Mientras camina pasa la vista de esquina a esquina,
no se ve un alma, esta desierta toda la avenida.
Cuando, ¡de pronto!, una mujer sale del zaguan,
y Pedro Navaja aprieta un puño dentro del gaban.
Mira pa' un lado, mira pa' l' otro y no ve a nadie,
y a la carrera, pero sin ruido, cruza la calle.
Y mientras tanto, en la otra acera, va esa mujer
refunfuñando pues no hizo pesos con que comer.

And as he walks his eyes take in every corner of the block,
But there isn't a soul, it's completely deserted, every door is locked.
When all of a sudden, a woman leaves that storefront place,
And Pedro Razor closes his fist and quickens his pace.
From side to side, he squints and searches, not a soul in the street,
Then he nervously glides across the block on sneakered feet.
When after awhile, across the way, walks that lady of the night,
Short on money, her stomach empty—a sorry sight.



Mientras camina del viejo abrigo saca un revólver, esa mujer,
paraguardarlo en su cartera pa' que no estorb; un 38, Smith and Wesson, del Especial
que carga encima pa' que la libre de todo mal.
Y Pedro Navaja, puñal en mano, le fue pa' encima,
el diente de oro iba alumbrando toda la Avenida.
Mientras reía, el puñal hundía, sin compasión,
cuando de pronto, sono un disparo como un cañón.

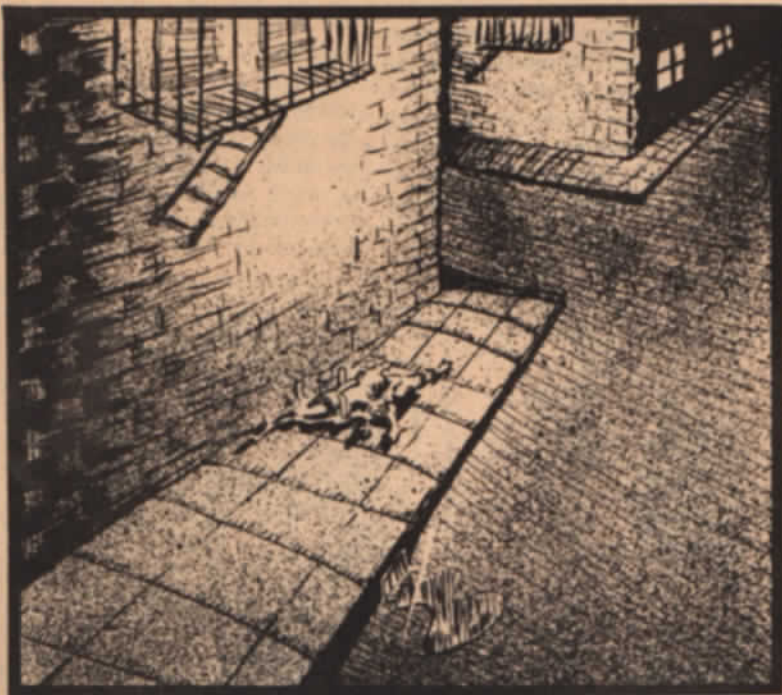
And as she walks, from her threadbare coat, she pulls a gun,
And slips it into a tattered purse, her nerves undone.
A Smith and Wesson, policeman's special—a thirty eight,
Which she carries on her to even the odds when she's working late.

And Pedro Razor, knife in hand, jumped her from behind,
The whole street glowing with the shimmer of his gold tooth shine.
And as he laughed the blade sunk in coldblooded and quick,
When all of a sudden, in the peace of the night, a revolver clicked.



Y Pedro Navaja cayó en la acera mientras veía, a la mujer,
que revólver en mano y de muerte herida a él le decía,
"yo que pensaba, hoy no es mi día, estoy salá,
pero Pedro Navaja, tu estas peor, no estas en na!"

And Pedro Razor fell to the ground while watching this street-wise dame,
Mortally wounded, but holding the gun, call out his name,
"Pedro Razor, I truly thought this wasn't my day—not one trick,
But bro' you're worse, cause Pedro Razor, you just ain't hip!"



Y creanme gente, que aunque hubo ruido, nadie salió.
No hubo curiosos, ni hubo preguntas, y nadie lloró;
solo un borracho con los dos muertos se tropezó, y
cogió el revólver, el puñal y los pesos y se marchó;
y tropezando, se fue cantando desafinad el coro que
aquí les traigo
dando, el mensaje de mi canción.

coro; ¡La vida te da sorpresas,
sorpresas te da la vida, Ay Dios!

And believe me people, though there was noise, nobody dared
Ask a question, or shed a tear, or show they cared.
Just the neighborhood drunk, who stumbled upon that grisly sight,
Picked up the gun, the blade, and the bills and tipped into the night.
And stumbling along, he sang a song, his heart content,
The chorus which here I bring you, carrying my message and its intent.

CHORUS: In life there are surprises,
There are surprises in life, Oh Lord!



Since the release of the LP *SIEMBRA*, by Ruben Blades and Willie Colon, the album has stimulated constant commentary in the world of Salsa. Although we have already reviewed the album in "LP Picks", we feel it merits more attention. So did former *BILLBOARD* magazine columnist Agustin Gurza, who is now residing on the West Coast and serving as Pickwick Records' national Latin music coordinator. Mr. Gurza is one of the foremost writers on Latin music, and we welcome his inspired commentary on *SIEMBRA*.

effort, *Siembra*, an album which glows with the distinction of special accomplishment. If Colon and Blades launched a musical expedition with their first LP, sounding out new directions (but with restraint), they now offer us a work glowing with the confident triumph of having discovered a new world for Salsa. And just as their work is charged from beginning to end with the hopeful social vision for a new era in Latin America, the album provides a promising musical vision for the future of Salsa itself. This is music which is fresh, bold and innovative; music that outstrips the confines of its form. And suddenly the

and pop puffery, here is an album that challenges and provokes, probes and penetrates. At a time when too many Latins have been swept up by the nonsense of that disco glitter, Colon and Blades are tackling serious social issues, deflating social pretense, and asking for social commitment.

Pablo "Yoruba" Guzman wrote in the December issue that Colon, as a "seventeen year-old upstart, decided to buck prevailing fashion" during the once popular boogaloo craze, thereby anticipating the "Latin Renaissance" of the late sixties by a couple of years. Now in the late seventies, history repeats itself

SIEMBRA

A
New
Era
for
Salsa



"At a time when too many Latins have been swept up by the nonsense of disco glitter, Colon and Blades are tackling serious social issues, deflating social pretense, and asking for social commitment."—Agustin Gurza

BY AGUSTIN GURZA

More than any of their colleagues, Willie Colon and Ruben Blades have succeeded in remolding Salsa without robbing the art form of its identity. With the ground-breaking album "Metiendo Mano," their first collaboration, the duo pioneered a course for Salsa that explored uncharted but fertile creative territory. Now, more than 18 months later, the pair reappears with a second

word "Salsa" seems an inadequate description. *Siembra*, in short, has redefined its genre so conclusively that it begs to be renamed.

One guards against overstatement as a critic. But *Siembra*, indeed, leaps ahead of anything in its field. A small measure of its exceptional quality is the excitement it began stirring in Salsa circles even before completion. The true gauge of its greatness, however, is the depth of its creative courage and conviction. In this numbing period of disco dementia

with Colon and Blades again bucking the fashion and proving that the Latin Renaissance is in full flower.

In *Siembra*, Colon and Blades have placed a song's substance at least on a par with its form. Content is now the primary element, and the music is designed to support the message. Salsa has already been moving progressively in this direction, placing a greater emphasis on lyrics. *Metiendo Mano* itself was a landmark in that course. *Siembra* is now the culmination of that trend, the full in-

tegration of lyrics and music within Salsa. That the Colon/Blades collaboration yielded this accomplishment follows naturally from their division of labor. Blades, who penned six of the album's seven tunes, offers the message. Colon, in producing the album and contributing the LP's most unusual arrangement, creates the musical vehicle for the effective delivery of that message.

All of this should definitively dispel any lingering notions that Salsa need be primarily dance music. Lyrically and musically, *Siembra* is best appreciated from the living room couch in front of the stereo with the album jacket in hand. The album's intellectual and poetic substance, its refined production and complex arrangements, its subtle moods and impassioned messages are best on the danceroom floor. *Siembra* is an album for listening, and only for dancing secondarily, if at all. Not that it lacks Salsa's essential rhythmic spirit. But in contrast to, say, Tipica 73's recent (and excellent) *Salsa Encendida*, percussive power and instrumental intensity are not the key to *Siembra's* success. In this regard, it is crucial to notice that *Siembra* is singularly lacking in instrumental solos. This is both a corollary of its emphasis on content and a reflection of Colon's rejection of American jazz as a primary influence in his music.

As far as content is concerned, *Siembra* has taken us a step beyond where we stood with *Metiendo Mano*. We have moved from social observation to social exhortation. While *Metiendo Mano* posed social questions, it allowed listeners to provide their own answers or remain indifferent if they chose. *Siembra*, on the other hand, demands attention. It does not allow the listener to avoid making a choice. It is full of imperatives. So after etching that haunting portrait of "Pablo Pueblo" in the previous LP, Colon and Blades are now asking to do something about it. And the urgency of their petition is best reflected in the commanding chorus which shouts "Siembra" in the title song.

As with "Siembra," the lesson of the opening tune, "Plastico," is intended to apply universally, although anyone familiar with the comfortable social classes in any Latin nation will recognize Blades' plastic characters as somehow uniquely Latin. "Plastico" is a rejection of superficial social values in general, but its conclusion can be made specific and applied to anyone's life. When Blades asks us to abandon "modelos importados" he could (and does) mean

political models, or fashion models, or cultural models. The son's lesson, then, could be well taken by those Salsa artists who still flounder in musical compromises for commercialism's sake. Thus, in a satirical musical bite as stinging as the lyrics themselves, the tune opens with a few bars of trite disco music.

"Plastico" confronts us with the album's call to action at its most direct. In the roll-call of Latin nations that closes the tune—appropriately punctuated by a march-like arrangement—Colon and Blades are drawing the line and asking us all to

precisely the point of the work as a whole: you reap what you sow. In this song, then, lives of violence lived in the shadows lead to violent deaths which nobody notices. The Luis Ortiz arrangement brings a dramatic tension to the tune which escalates in tone as the verses progress to the bloody climax.

The screams of sirens and the harsh newscast which close Side One give way to the spiritual tranquility and haunting beauty of "Maria Lionza," which opens Side Two. One of the most extraordinary tunes on any Salsa album ever, this is such a rich musical blend of Latin American rhythms and melodies that the



choose sides. We are faced with the challenge at the outset, and "Siembra" is immediately sparked with the sense of purpose which infuses the whole of the work.

Siembra is blessed with the beauty of cohesiveness. (It is not, however, a concept album in the crude rock sense of the word.) Thus, the next number, "Pedro Navaja," is much more than a well-drawn story with a clever moral. Within the context of the LP, it becomes a parable whose lesson is

arrangement could only have come from Willie Colon's continental inspiration. One hears primitive indigenous chants, Andean dances, folkloric festivity, all combining to imbue the tune with an effective sense of mystery and ceremonial grace.

Blades' melody is pure and placid, making the song an oasis of rest on the album. Its peace is inspired by Blades' confidence in a benevolent force that guides the destiny of troubled Latin

SIEMBRA
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 45

America. The identification of this goddess with nature is crucial, providing a striking counterpoint to the materialism decried at the album's opening. The images tell all. In "Plastico," Blades sees a city where, instead of the sun, a dollar rises; in "Maria Lionza," the goddess is sheltered by walls of wind and counts the sun among her companions.

The following number, "Ojos," is the album's only non-Blades composition. But the Johnny Ortiz tune is an excellent choice, complementing the album's thrust towards truth and the unmasking of pretense. In contrast to the "chica plastica" who has a "mirada esquivada," or Pedro Navaja, who obscures his gaze (and his intentions) with dark glasses, this tune praises people whose eyes are windows of genuine sentiments—from joy to desperation. And again we find the rejection of materialism and the embracing of nature: "Ojos, que encuntran fortuna, mirando a la luna y a su resplandor." Blades' vocal work on this number is exceptionally vibrant and skin-tingling.

Then there is "Dime," a simple love song with an appealing melody and a distinctive arrangement by Louie Cruz. One is struck here by the contrast between the despair of the lyrics and the calm fluidity of the music.

Finally, "Siembra" closes the album on an exuberant and hopeful note, just as the tune "Pueblo" closed *Metiendo Mano*. The uplifting spirit of this final number is buttressed by the sweeping, soaring, often dramatic arrangement by Carlos Franzetti. This one piece contains all the driving fervor, the burning conviction, and the inspiring vision which is at the heart of the work as a whole. With rousing self-confidence, Blades assures us that the future will bloom for Latin America if its people take the care to cultivate the seeds of that future.

"A la larga tu veras," Colon and Blades guarantee. And they leave us this album as proof of its own principle—"De acuerdo a la semilla, así serán los frutos que recogeras." Colon and Blades themselves are now reaping the fruits of a fertile artistic union, making an important contribution to their art in the process. For if disco music is the symbol of the complacent and superficial seventies, *Siembra* foretells a decade of purposeful prosperity for Latinos and their music in the eighties. With *Siembra*, the seeds for the meaningful growth of Salsa have been sown.



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