

Wednesday, August 3, 1977

VARIETY

Fania All-Stars

Sonora Poncena (14)

Ricardo Marrero (8)

(MADISON SQ. GARDEN, N.Y.)

Few aggregations rate the "all-star" tag as well as the Fania All-Stars as the Latin musicians again proved at Madison Square Garden, Saturday (30). The Jerry Masucci promotion drew well, but fell short of selling out at a \$10 top.

Evening opened well with Ricardo Marrero & His Group, who were strong in salsa, but the leader, on electric piano, wasn't miked strongly enough for his vocal. Next came a crowd pleaser, Senora Poncena, whose vocalists and musicians delivered traditional Latin rhythms.

The crowd was there for the All-Stars, including leader Johnny Pacheco. An example of the wealth of talent was the opener with Ray Barretto filling in on congas because Johnny Rodriguez of Tipica 73 was late. Willie Colon also was late, but there were enough present to go ahead.

Five standout vocalists participated, including Ruben Blades, a current fave; Ismael Miranda, who drew the biggest hand; and the veteran Pete (El Conde) Rodriguez, a veteran whose voice was the best of the five. Ismael Quintana and Santos Colon were the others.

Instrumental flashes abounded, as did stage gimmicks. Pianist Papo Lucca was among the standouts in an invigorating program.

—Kirb.