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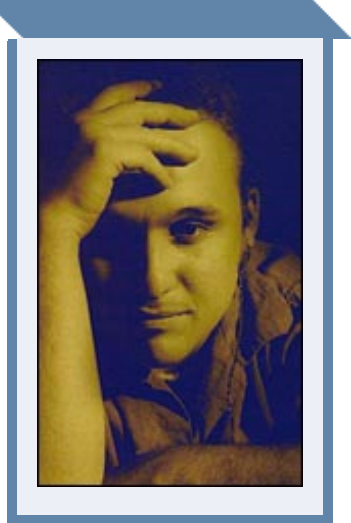
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Introducing percussionist Arturo Stable



Posted on September 6, 2004

Arturo Stable is one of the newest Cuban talents in the US. His abilities as a multi-percussionist, arranger and producer place him among the most important up and coming figures on the International Latin Jazz Scene.

Arturo was born in Santiago de Cuba on July 7, 1975. At the early age of four, he started to study piano and music theory with different private teachers. Later on, Arturo's family moved to Havana, where he enrolled in the prestigious Manuel Saumell Conservatory of Music. After completing his studies in the Saumell School, Arturo entered the National Conservatory Amadeo Roldán, where he obtained his first music degree as a percussionist.

In 1993, Arturo traveled to the city of Puebla, Mexico, where he had the chance to expand his musical career as a player and teacher. Arturo joined Puebla State University (BUAP) where he taught Afro-Cuban and classical percussion for more than two years. He also pursued a Post-Graduate Diploma in Music Education from the University of Development UNIDES.

While playing in Mexico, Arturo was able to interact with many great musicians of varied musical styles such as Flamenco, Pop, Latin Jazz, Rock and South-American Music. He shared the stage with renowned artists such as Magdalena Zárate, Los Hermanos Castro, Pilar Rioja, Héctor Talavera, Roberto Amaya and Fernando Acosta, just to name a few.

The Berklee College of Music granted Arturo a scholarship and he joined this prestigious institution in 2001. He was also granted in the same year with the B.E.S.T. Scholarship and the Schaller-Flores Scholarship.

Boston was a major positive change for Arturo's musical career. He obtained a degree in contemporary Writing and Production from Berklee and became very active in the Massachusetts's Latin Jazz scene. Arturo shared the stage with artists such as Victor Mendoza, Tony Pérez, Osmany Paredes, Francisco Mela, Eguie Castrillo, Oskar Cartaya, Giovanni Hidalgo, Horacio Hernández, Charles Flores (Michel Camilo Trio), Jane Bunnnett, Juan Serrano, Flamenco virtuoso Antonio Rayo "Rayito" (Ricky Martin) among others.

**Introducing Percussionist Arturo Stable and his debut release -
3rd Step (Origen Records 101 ... 2004)
by Tomas Peña**

TP: Why did you choose to call your album 3rd Step? Describe the three steps.

AS: I had a plan in mind when I decided to move from Cuba to the U. S. (5 years ago). The first step was to (literally) "MOVE." This meant completing all the necessary paperwork, obtaining a visa and money, finding a place to live, learning the language, etc. The second step was to study jazz harmony and composition in the United States (the process is never ending). The third step was to produce a recording where I could apply all the lessons that I have learned (thus far). I think this is every musician's dream. To study, do research and then hear yourself (on a recording, etc). It is just great!

TP: You recorded 3rd Step in a mere seven hours? Describe the recording process and explain how you were able to complete it in such a short period of time.

AS: I must admit that I had an advantage. First, I knew whom I wanted to record with. Second, I knew the musicians personally and we have a history. Not necessarily as a band, however, I have played with the pianist, bass player and drummer on separate occasions. This gave me some insight as to how to approach them musically and personally. We rehearsed for two hours the day before we went into the studio. There is another factor that allowed me to save recording time, the pieces I chose. The tunes are simple (form-wise): Intro/Head/Solos/Head and in some cases Coda... that's it. I wanted the music to capture the interaction between the musicians.

TP: For the benefit of those who are not musically trained, please explain the following musical terms: "Intro/Head/Solos/Head and Coda."

AS: Ok, all of the pieces have a form. Musical forms can range from a classical minuet to a rhythmic change (in form). Or from the blues to a sophisticated or modern approach. The word "form" refers to the shape of the piece: How does the piece begin? How is the theme introduced? In what way is the melody developed? All of these are factors that define the form of a musical piece. By saying "Intro/Head/Solos/Head " I mean " Introduction" - The section that start the piece and sets the mood. " Head " - The main melody or theme. "Solos" - This is the part where the musicians improvise over the basic harmony and groove of the tune and " Coda" - In most cases this is the final part of the tune, the last musical statement.

TP: Describe your style of music.

AS: This recording is the consequence of a particular moment in time (about one year ago). However, my music is always evolving. I am young and still developing as an artist. When I perform or compose I think in terms of interaction, sharing, joy, freedom and the crazy equilibrium between tension and release. In addition, I think in terms of technique and forms and my music (like me) is very passionate.

As for 3rd Step, this is a recording where the main characteristics of Latin jazz are respected. However, these concepts do not limit our playing at any given moment. This is an album where you can feel the musicians in the midst of some intense creative circumstances. Like it or not, it is "HONEST" Music.

TP: Despite the fact that you recorded the album in record time, you have describe the process as a, "tough journey." What do you mean by that?

AS: Well, indeed it was. First, from a musical point of view, it was difficult to choose the music, to make the parts, and to get to the point where one can explain to the piano player why you want a sharp nine instead of a flat nine. At that point you start realizing how easy it is to be "a sideman"... you get to the gig, ready your charts, play and that's it. Being "at the forefront" requires a very accurate knowledge of what you want and

requires great discipline, energy, and time.

Once we got to the studio it was difficult to conduct the session. Since there were only five of us it was nothing major, however, it was still daunting (at times), playing, and making sure that the microphones were the correct type, placed correctly, etc. I had a great engineer, but ultimately I made all the decisions. In addition, I decided to do the mixing and the mastering on my own... that was tough! I guess I am the type of person who enjoys a challenge (I had just purchased a "home studio" so I decided to go for the post-production). It was time consuming, but I think I learned a lot by mixing the recording myself. It gave me more control over the material.

TP: You composed all of the tunes on 3rd Step. Describe your creative process and where (or how) you draw your inspiration.

AS: I'm always writing. Inspiration is in every corner. You have to let it flow. When a melody comes to my mind, I play with it. You never know what will come of it. For example, sometimes a melody sounds bad as a jazz tune but sounds good as a string bed for a documentary film. My inspiration pretty much obeys my instincts. Something as ridiculous as my dog's attitude may inspire me to compose a tune! However, it is only in the peace of my studio that I can take this initial attempt to the next level. Then, instrumentation, style, form and colors give shape to the final product.

TP: What is the significance of the following titles? Midnight's Dad, Mad Dog, Cimarrón, Danzón del Abuelo and Ochún Te Ampara?

AS: All of these tunes have a history. Midnight's Dad is dedicated to my Father. He is a great artist. He plays the piano, paints, sculpts and writes. And he is great at everything he does. My father has always been immersed in the arts and I have learned a lot from him. When I wrote this tune, I was thinking about how his mornings would start at 3 pm, dinner was served at 1 am and bed time was somewhere between 4 am and 6 am. Crazy isn't it?

I wrote Mad Dog sitting in a train station in Boston. A woman had this crazy, nervous dog. That's why the sections of this tune are 9 measures and 7 measures, instead of the traditional 8's.

Danzón del Abuelo (the Grandfather's Danzón) is a tune that I started composing when I was 15 years old. It is dedicated to my Grandfather. He use to dance the Danzón and he was a very musical person. I had the "A" section of the tune written somewhere in a box with old papers, and I decided to finish the tune to honor the memory of my grandfather.

Cimarrón is a word that we use in Cuba for the slaves that ran away and/or escaped. The melody of this tune folds into a little scale that seems to be running away... with a very strong 6/8 feel.

Ochún is the goddess (deity) of the rivers and represents the female beauty in the Yoruba pantheon. Cubans believe that she protects the Island. The chorus of this song says, "Ay Cuba Linda, Ochún te Ampara" (Ay, beautiful Cuba may Ochún protect you).

TP: One of the tunes I find particularly interesting is Yambú Marino. As you know, the Yambú, Guagancó and Columbia make up the complex of percussion driven dances that pertain to rumba. What is the significance of the title? Is this jazz improvisation over traditional Yambú rhythms?

Well, for this tune I created a part for the (trap) drum-set (performed by Mela) that is based in the traditional rhythm of the Yambú. As you mention, the Yambú is one of the sub-genres of the Rumba. I'm also improvising on the "Quinto" (conga), using some patterns that belong to this rich, slow rhythm. The word, " Marino" literally means " from the sea." That is why I recreate the sounds of the sea, the waves, the seashore with percussion.

TP: Who is the vocalist on Ochún Te Ampara?

AS: My good friend Mela (the drummer).

TP: Your group is a tight unit. In addition, the music well executed and heartfelt. Who are some of the musicians that accompany you on this recording?

They are certainly excellent musicians, and great individuals as well. The pianist Rafael Alcalá, is originally from Nuevo Laredo, Mexico. He has been performing since he was 12 years old and his playing is very solid. He is the kind of player that always maintains a high level of interaction. Rafael is a Berklee alumnae and he is one of the young pianists that is making a big impression. Drummer Francisco Mela is just pure adrenaline. Mela has been playing professionally for more than 15 years, and has performed worldwide with, Chucho Valdés, David Sanchez, John Pattituci and Joe Lovano to name a few. He is a close friend and we have good rapport. He is also an extremely musical drummer with solid intuition in traditional Cuban music as well as jazz. Carlos del Pino was the anchor in this recording. His bass lines are the consequence of many years of experience in Latin music. He is a graduate of the National School of Music in Habana, Cuba. Carlos has played on many stages throughout the world. I'm sure you will enjoy his traditional and tasteful playing in tunes such as Cimarrón and Danzón del Abuelo. My guest in this recording, saxophone player Tim Mayer. Tim has a great knowledge of Latin music and we have shared the stage many times. He is familiar with every jazz tune ever recorded and can play in any tone. That's more than enough credentials for me.

TP: Name an artist, or artists that have inspired you in some way, past and present?

AS: I must begin with my father. He taught me that music is much more than a set of well-organized notes. I should also mention Cuban pianist Emiliano Salvador. Of course, it is impossible to omit "interplanetary" conga virtuoso Giovanni Hidalgo, Tata Guines, Duke Ellington, Brazilian writer Paolo Cohelo, Camarón de la Isla, Vicente Amigo, Joe Garzone, Miles, and my wife Luz.

TP: When is 3rd Step scheduled to be released and where can it be purchased?

AS: The release date is August 20, 2004. 3rd Step can be purchased at the following websites: CDBaby.com - Descarga.com - JazzPromo.com - Itunes.com - Amazon.com and arturostable.com. It can also be found at Tower Records, Museo del Disco in Miami and local record stores.

TP: Do you have any plans to tour with your working band in the near future? If so, please post your itinerary.

AS: We are working on that as we speak. Hopefully we will be able to organize a U. S. tour to promote 3rd Step (this year). There is also the possibility of touring in Canada and Mexico however, this has not been confirmed as of yet.

TP: What recordings and/or artists are you currently listening to at home, in your car or portable device?

AS: Listening, listening , listening... it is so important. Right now I am listening to Danilo Perez's Panamonk (I can't get enough of it). Also, Cositas Buenas from Paco de Lucia (Flamenco is my passion) and Joni Mitchell 's Both sides Now (wow!). I am also listening to a self-made compilation that includes some of my favorite solos by Giovanni Hidalgo... the magic in those hands is just too much...

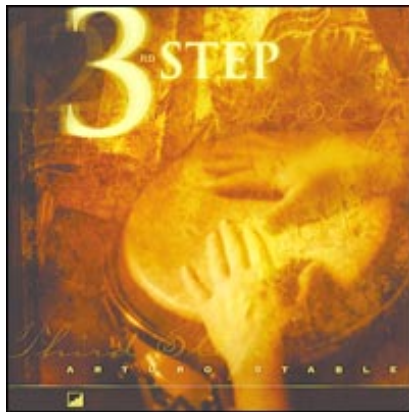
TP: Just curious... what is it about Joni Mitchell's music that you find so intriguing?

AS: I'm a fan of her music and her paintings. I think she is an exceptional performer and I love her lyrics. In addition, I admire the work of Vince Mendoza with strings (I'm a big fan of writing for strings). I also enjoy Wayne Shorter's playing in this album. I think is a great "love album"... which is unusual for our times. A lot of pop songs talk about love, but only a few (very few in my opinion) capture the right feeling. I must mention (again) that I love the treatment of the Orquesta-Estudio by Mr. Mendoza. It is remarkable!

TP: Arturo, thank you for speaking with Latin Jazz Network. Good luck with your debut as a leader and please keep Latin Jazz Network informed of your touring schedule and future endeavors. After listening to your music and speaking with you, I get the distinct impression that we are going to be hearing a lot from Arturo Stable in the future. Palante!

Contact Arturo Stable at: www.arturostable.com

Tomas Peña - Co-Editor
Latin Jazz Network
September 2004



ARTURO STABLE - 3RD. STEP
2004 Origen Records

Musicians:

Rafael Alcalá, piano
Francisco Mela, drums
Carlos del Pino, bass

Guest:

Tim Mayer, saxophone

Tracks: (click on titles to listen)

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Llegamos Arrollando | 6. Yambú Marino |
| 2. Midnight's Dad | 7. Ochún te Ampara |
| 3. Mad Dog | 8. A Bailar |
| 4. Congas Libres | 9. Cimarrón |
| 5. Danzón del Abuelo | 10. Nos Vamos con la Conga |



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