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Conversation with Harvie S

by Tomas Peña

"Composing has always been a major part of my musical life. When I was a child I was constantly writing tunes. The music on "Texas Rumba" is an extension of this life long process. In each composition I just try to capture an overall mood or feeling and communicate it to the other musicians so that when we play it together we are on the same wave length..."

Posted on March 13, 2004



I recently had an on-line chat with bass player/groove master, Harvie S. Primarily, we spoke about Harvie's latest project, Texas Rumba.

Coincidentally, Harvie and his band recorded Texas Rumba at Sweet Rhythm, one of my favorite New York night spots!

Since the club opened its doors (about two years ago) it has been establishing a reputation for presenting an intriguing lineup of contemporary music rooted in a variety of traditions - Jazz, Reggae, Salsa, R & B, Merengue, Latin jazz, Brazilian music and beyond.

Conversation with Harvie S

Let's discuss the catchy title of your latest project, TEXAS RUMBA. What inspired you to name this particular composition, Texas Rumba?

Not a big story on this one. I just listened to it and the title came to me. It has a bit of a cowboy vibe. I think it fits.

The album was recorded at one of my favorite venues, Sweet Rhythm (formerly known as Sweet Basil - New York). Describe the interaction between the band and the audience during the making of this recording.

I really like Sweet Rhythm very much. I had done some gigs there with other bands and felt it would be the perfect place to do a live album. Turns out my CD is the first live recording there under the Sweet Rhythm name.

Journalist Mark Holston calls TEXAS RUMBA " a new Latin-jazz style recording." There are a number of musicians (whose names will go unmentioned) that vehemently oppose the term, Latin jazz. What's your take on the term Latin jazz? Moreover, how do you describe your music?

I totally understand how some people feel about the term "Latin Jazz", but please note that there is Dixieland Jazz, Swing Jazz, Big Band Jazz, Be-Bop, Post Bop, Modern Jazz, Free Jazz, Avant Garde Jazz, Acid Jazz (whatever that is or was), Cool Jazz, Smooth Jazz, etc. Latin Jazz is just another term. Latin music has always been a big influence in the

development of Jazz as Jazz has been in the development of Latin Music. Latin Jazz came from America, mostly from New York and California and was created by a mixture of people from many walks of life.

Here is what Charles Walker wrote in a review of Texas Rumba [[www.sudden-thoughts](http://www.sudden-thoughts.com)]: "Texas Rumba unfolds through its variety of moods, bassist/leader Harvie S shows himself particularly adept at incorporating all kinds of Latin influences into his music, creating a sometimes-vibrant, sometimes-thoughtful sound that doesn't quite fit into any pre-defined labels on the market today. Sure it is "Latin Jazz" but it is a highly unique one." Sometimes others can express it better.

You composed nine of the eleven tunes for this project. What was the inspiration for tunes such as "Good News," "Facil" and "Curved Corners?"

Composing has always been a major part of my musical life. When I was a child I was constantly writing tunes. The music on "Texas Rumba" is an extension of this life long process. In each composition I just try to capture an overall mood or feeling and communicate it to the other musicians so that when we play it together we are on the same wave length--the creative process is shared among us. I am always experimenting with forms, harmony and orchestration. I also arrange each tune to feature each band member in a positive and unique way, while still challenging them to take further steps. Truthfully, the titles come later. I don't try to write something. I let the music come out of me and I feel blessed when it works.

I like to challenge myself and the band with music that is demanding. Quite often when people hear my music they realize how challenging it can be. If they are musicians and they try to play it I often hear "Wow, I didn't realize how complex and involved this is." An example is "Blindside". "Blindside" is written in 15/4; we play on the whole form. It is also in a somewhat altered clave rhythm. "Underneath It All" starts out with an intro in 4/4, then goes into 21/4 and we improvise in that time signature. "From Now On" has a very demanding bass part that has the bass bowing a melody out front, then in counterpoint with the sax, then in unison with the sax in 16th notes. At the end the bass, sax and trumpet blend as one in three part harmony, all while in clave. "Facil" is what it says, but you better know your changes.

The supporting cast is quite impressive. Is this your working band or did this talented group of musicians come together strictly for this recording? Please elaborate on why you selected the current band members and what they bring to the table as individuals.

This is my working band. These guys are my first choice to play my music. I recorded live because I know we sound best in that situation. I plan to keep playing with this same ensemble and develop the music further. Daniel Kelly, Piano; Scott Robert Avidon, Sax; Renato Thoms, Percussion; Adam Weber, Drums. All play with passion and soul.

When will TEXAS RUMBA be available and where can it be purchased?

You can get "Texas Rumba" on line at www.zohomusic.com or www.cdbaby.com and check out some sound samples. It is now available in stores and is currently being distributed by Synergy Distribution.

Standard question: What is on rotation in your CD Player as we speak? Who are some of your favorite artists and why?

I listen to a wide variety of music. Lately to more of the older stuff. Fania All Stars Live at the Cheetah vol. 2, Alegre All Stars "Te Invita", Arsenio Rodriguez, Wynton Kelly "Kelly Blue", Thelonious Monk "Brilliant Corners", Ahmad Jamal "live at the Pershing Room" and a lot of WBGO.

What is in the future for Harvie S and his band? Please mention where you will

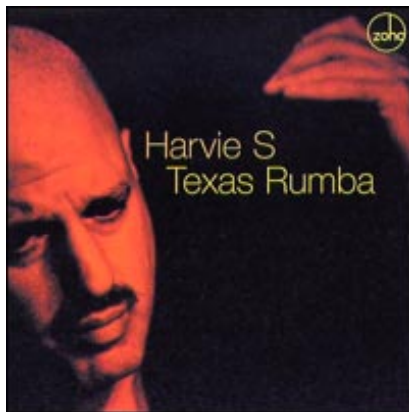
be performing in the near future and where you can be contacted.

On March 13th the band will be at Satalla for one show at 10pm. On April 8th we will return to Sweet Rhythm (shows 8 and 10pm) Please go to www.harvies.com for more details.

Thank You Harvie for taking the time to speak with Latin Jazz Network about your latest project. Best of luck with your latest endeavor.

Tomas Peña - Co-Editor
Latin Jazz Network
3/2/04

For more information on the following venues go to:
Sweet Rhythm - www.sweetrhythmny.com
Satalla - www.satalla.com
Contact Harvie S at: www.harvies.com



HARVIE S - TEXAS RUMBA
2004 ZOHO Music L.L.C.

Recorded live at Sweet Rhythm in New York City
on May 20 and 21, 2003.
Produced by Harvie S

Musicians:
Harvie S: acoustic bass
Daniel Kelly: piano
Scott Robert Avidon: tenor/soprano sax
Renato Thoms: percussion
Adam Weber: drums
Gregory Rivkin: trumpet

Tracks: (click on titles to listen)

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Texas Rumba | 7. Before |
| 2. Good News | 8. Facil |
| 3. From Now On | 9. Monk's Mood |
| 4. Curved Corners | 10. Underneath It All |
| 5. Blindside | 11. Floating |
| 6. Momentano | |



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