



## MIGUEL ROMERO

MIGUEL ROMERO: "You can take the boy out of the island but not the island out of the boy, especially when you take the boy out of the island of Cuba into the island of Manhattan." Read on...

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### 1. I understand you had a great experience working as musical director for MALO and BRAZUCA. Can you tell us about that period?



**MIGUEL:** "Working with Brazuca was a very good experience because we rehearsed at Dom Um Rumao's studio on 24th Street in NYC and I got to learn a lot of Brazilian rhythms and instruments from Rumao. Malo was not a good experience except for arranging and working with the horn section which had a revolving door of guys including the Brecker Bros, but I'm still owed money from those days, so I can't classify the whole experience as great. Musically it was very good working with Carlos, Tony, Gus, Dom & the rest."

### 2. Who are the main influences in your music?

**MIGUEL:** "My main influences are Peruchin, Eddie Palmieri, McCoy Tyner, Cecil Taylor, Stravinsky, Bartok, Miles Davis, Sly, Herbie Hancock, Chick Corea, Cachao and his brother Orestes."

### 3. How do you perceive the work done on "Island Breeze" and "Cuban Jazz Funk." Are they different perspectives of your musical views? Is it "Cuban Jazz Funk" a follow-up to your first CD?

**MIGUEL:** "Cuban Jazz Funk is a follow-up to Island Breeze, which was a follow-up to "Wake it Up" - a dance release which climbed up to #3 on the Billboard charts.

After getting kind of bored with dance music in 1996, after the major labels got in the act and began in my opinion to water down dance music, I decided to go to the opposite end of things and began writing Island Breeze in 1997 and released it in 1998.

Island Breeze is a mellow and laid back cd which I conceptualized in Jamaica. The concept is like a regular day in the Caribbean where things start out slow and the pace gets progressively faster until things wind down again in the early evening and the cycle begins again.

Cuban Jazz Funk is harder and funkier than Island Breeze. The way it came about was that I was tired of the loop base music that was and still is passing for jazz these days. Now, I don't have anything against using loops, I've been using loops since the early 80's on my productions from dance divas Jocelyn Brown to Michelle Weeks. But I feel that putting a drum loop along with a bass and percussion loop together and letting a sax player riff on top is pretty lazy on the part of the producers and artists who are doing it. But anyway, Cuban Jazz Funk was done in the studio live and all cuts were first takes except for 2 occasions where we had technical difficulties such as tape running out in the middle of a song."

### 4. Your music is associated with the Caribbean Sea: beaches, sand, islands... Can you elaborate about this feature in your work?



**MIGUEL:** "You can take the boy out of the island but not the island out of the boy, especially when you take the boy out of the island of Cuba into the island of Manhattan."



**5. What are your plans for the near future, are you already working on new material?**

**MIGUEL:** "My plans are to go to Cuba and record my next cd there, for which I am starting to write the music."

**6. If you could invite some great musicians to record with you, who would they be?**

**MIGUEL:** "I would have Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez on drums, Marcus Miller on bass, Giovanni Hidalgo or Anga on congas."

**7. What do you think of the actual state of development of Latin jazz music and/or musicians?**

**MIGUEL:** "It's very good and getting better."

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