

Nancy Rodriguez



INTRO: Your request (to do this list) came in at the worst possible time for me. I am currently working on a 12 hour tribute to Mario Bauzá and have very little time to spare. So I decided to do what I always do when in a crunch...took it to my family. Music has always been a shared experience in my

family. Growing up, I was exposed to some of the best music of many worlds — classical, jazz, Afro-Cuban. You name it, we heard it. Cal Tjader, the Palmieri brothers, Bauzá and Machito, Rodriguez, Puente, Count Basie, Stan Getz - the list is truly endless. So when I hear something good, I immediately call my dad, who more times than not is just about to call me about the same CD. So when I need brainstorming on short notice, where else would I go but to Dad's place? We don't need an occasion, to tell the truth. We do this often just for fun, to share what we've heard, to share old favorites, to take apart new additions and just to listen and learn from one another. We spent a whole week listening, remembering, and discussing hundreds of CD's and the hardest part of your assignment was to narrow it down to just 25. I hope you appreciate the many sleepless nights wondering if we should have added this one, or left out that one. In the end, the final 25 came about because of my own personal taste.

BIOGRAPHY: Nancy Rodriguez organized the Puerto Rican Organization for Latin American Music when she was in her teens. With the help of Izzy Sanabria, Emie Leogrande and Fania president Jerry Masucci, she was able to stage a free concert in Central Park (which drew over five thousand) and a dance at Manhattan Center promoting the increased use of Latin music on radio and T. V. In the early 1970s she co-produced the popular "Latin Roots" radio program with her then-husband, Felipe Luciano. Taking time off to raise a son, she attended Bronx Community College to learn to sing and read music while continuing to work part time in the music industry. She has recorded with Graciela and Mario Bauzá, among others, and has done live performances with Louie Ramirez and Senegalese band leader, Boncana Maiga. In 1987 she joined WBAI-FM in New York, where she produced and hosted her show, "Con Sabor Latino". During her years at WBAI Nancy has produced many specials on Latin legends, recently winning a National Federation of Community Broadcasters' Silver Reel Award for her tribute to Tito Puente, aired in 1992 on WBAI.

PERSONAL TASTE: Having grown up with so many types of music, I appreciate every kind of music as long as it's good. My own personal preference, though, is contemporary. Being a singer, I can appreciate what it takes to grow artistically and although you listen to the masters for inspiration and guidance, there comes a time you have to "do your own thing". I picked contemporary artists who show me that "doing their own thing" has given us a special treat.

1. SHADES OF JADE Salsa City: Shades Of Jade Vol. 3 (Pasado 5548-2) — Afro-Cuban jazz thrives under Bill Laster's care. You can dance to it or listen to it. A must for serious music lovers. (Catalog TL-10998)

2. DAVE VALENTIN Dave Valentin With Herbie Mann - **Two Amigos** (GRP/BMG GRD-9606) — The difference in age and musical background makes for an interesting exchange of talent and style. The older generation passing on the tradition of excellence to a new generation of talent. (Catalog TL-10480)

3. PONCHO SANCHEZ **A Night At Kimball's East** (Picante/Concord 4472) — This is one of the most exciting and flawless presentations in the Sanchez collection. The quality of the recording is exceptional for a live session and the musicianship is at its best. (The video is exceptional as well!) (Catalog TL-10708)

4. EDDIE PALMIERI EP (Fania F 661) - Eddie's finest hour! Style, quality, talent, imagination are all there in super concentrated doses. (Catalog TL-3940)

5. LA INDIA **Llegó La India Via Eddie Palmieri** (Soho Records 80864) — The combination of Eddie's trademark arrangements and India's impressive singing talent is almost more than the human heart (or ear) can bear. (Catalog TL-11809)

6. MARIO BAUZA **My Time Is Now** (Messidor 15924) — Maestro Bauzá is a perfectionist, bringing out a full, rich, exciting sound from his talented group of musicians' musicians. The music, arrangements and executions are all top drawer. It should have been called "My Time Is Always". (Catalog TL-12380)

7. GIOVANNI HIDALGO **Worldwide** (RMM/Sony 81056) — Hidalgo is talented, powerful, unique, and innovative - in short, awesome. He shows a new maturity in his playing and in his nurturing of his fellow musicians. My favorite track, "Blue Minor", highlights the diversity and intelligence behind the power. (Catalog TL-19379)

8. RAY DE LA PAZ With Louie Ramirez: **Otra Noche Caliente** (RMM/Sony 80748) — This was a welcome and happy reunion of an exceptionally well matched pair. They sound better than ever, if that's possible. The duet, "Suddenly", is outstanding. (Catalog TL-11504)

9. GILBERTO SANTA ROSA **A Dos Tiempos De Un Tiempo** (Sony 80895) — This young man has a great voice and uses it impressively to honor Tito Rodriguez in one of the finest tributes to that artist I have ever heard. Like Rodriguez, Santa Rosa can sing a ballad or an up-tempo number equally well. It is a treat to hear these old favorites done with the kind of class that Rodriguez would have approved of. (Catalog TL-11825)

10. JERRY GONZALEZ & FORT APACHE BAND **Moliendo Cafe** (Sunnyside 1061) — A fine example of how naturally talented the Gonzalez brothers are in both Afro-Cuban and jazz. Not for dancing, but certainly for educating the mind, ear and heart. (Catalog TL-12067)

11. TITO PUENTE **Royal T** (Picante/Concord 4553) — The Old Man River of the New York Sound, Puente just keeps rolling along - rich, full and strong. My personal favorites are the new rendition of "Maribo Gallego" and the Charlie Mingus classic "Moanin". (Catalog TL-12375)

12. RUBEN BLADES **Amor Y Control** (Sony 80839) — Containing some of his most sensitive and poignant lyrics, this CD shows the man's maturity and strength. Known for his political statements, in this CD Blades instead looks at the more universal problems of drugs, ignorance, loss and how humans all over the world overcome with love, faith and loyalty. (Catalog TL-11780)

13. RAY BARRETTO **Ancestral Messages** (Picante/Concord 4549) — Barretto uses 's full advantage the diverse nationalities in his band. Their unique interpretations of their musical ancestral roots gives this CD a rich and varied sound. In my opinion, this is one of Ray's best efforts. (Catalog TL-12286)

14. MONGO SANTAMARIA **Soca Me Nice** (Picante/Concord CCD-4362) — One of the finest congueros explores West Indian roots as well as jazz and Afro-Caribbean music. Authentic interpretations of complex rhythms, excellent arrangements and exhilarating performances make this a CD that should be part of any music lover's collection. (Catalog TL-8734)

15. SEIS DEL SOLAR **Decision** (Messidor 158212) — Ruben Blades' departure from the Seis del Solar group gives top arranger Oscar Hernandez the opportunity to guide the band in a new direction. The typical salsa sound is replaced with a more dynamic and modern Latin jazz orientation without sacrificing any of its original Latin roots. (Catalog TL-11623)

16. JOSÉ MANGUAL JR. **Tribute To Chano Pozo** (True Ventures 1001) — Mangual surrounded himself with the best percussionists in the business to pay homage to the great Chano Pozo. Anyone who loves the authentic rhythms as played by the late Maestro Pozo will appreciate this CD. (Catalog TL-12237)

17. MARC ANTHONY **Otra Nota** (Soho Records 80958) — This talented young man will be around for a long time. With an excellent feel for the music, a phenomenal voice and the charisma of a seasoned professional, this is a monster in the making. With its high quality sound and excellent arrangements, this is an impressive maiden voyage for Anthony in the Latin field. (Catalog TL-12048)

18. ALFREDO VALDES JR. **Up Tempo Mood** (Turquino 001) — Valdes surrounds himself with outstanding percussionists. His style is reminiscent of Noro Morales and Joe Loco. This CD should become a popular classic. (Catalog TL-11908)

19. CARABALI **Carabali** (Mango 162 539-888-9) — It has always surprised me that this group never got more recognition or air play. Oscar Hernandez shines as pianist and arranger, and the performances are as good or better than many contemporary bands that have "made it". A quality act all around. (Catalog TL-2252)

20. GONZALO RUBALCABA **Mi Gran Pasión** (Messidor 15999) — Rubalcaba takes the Cuban danzón in new directions. He replaces the traditional violins with brass and finds new melodic sources - like Tchaikovsky. Excellent (Catalog TL-10246)

21. ARTURO SANDOVAL **Tumbalito** (Messidor 15974) — This is a great CD for Sandoval. He surrounds himself with musicians who are able to artistically keep up with his lively imagination and high level of energy. A Latino Maynard Ferguson. (Catalog TL-10254)

22. JESUS "CHUCHO" VALDES **Lucumi: Piano Solo** (Messidor 15976) — Stepping away from Irakere, this talented pianist shows different sides of his own personality and training. Jazzy on some tracks, traditional in others, he gets his inspiration from the Orishas of the Lucumi, the mambos of his Cuba and the modern jazz influence of the States. (Catalog TL-10266)

23. MADERA FINA **Tallando La Salsa** (Madera 2710) — This New York salsa band may be "new" but each member has many years of experience on the salsa circuit. They are a tight group that delivers excellent numbers in a highly enjoyable way. This one is definitely "in the pocket". (Catalog TL-11811)

24. MICHEL CAMILO **Suntan** (Evidence 22030) — Camilo LOVES what he does. He approaches his music and his piano with GUSTO. The energy and speed with which he plays pops right out at you - making you feel his joy in what he does so well. (Catalog TL-11977)

25. BONGO LOGIC **¡Despierta!** (Rhythm Safari 57141) — This is definitely a Wake Up Call for all who love to dance. They fuse a great Afro-Cuban sound with jazz, funk and the kitchen sink. They get the blood rushing, the butt moving and the feet flashing. (Catalog TL-10638)