

The Latin-Jazz Network

[Presenting José Rizo's Mongorama](#)

June 29, 2011 by [danavas](#)
Filed under [CDs](#), [Features](#)



José Rizo's Mongorama

José Rizo's Mongorama picks up where the Jazz on the Latin Side All Stars left off. After a decade of fruitful existence, performing and recording four terrific CDs (Jazz on the Latin Side All Stars 1 and 2, The Last Bullfighter and Tambolero), the veteran KJazz radio host, producer, composer and bandleader takes a new direction and moves on to a new project, which is actually a continuation of the original Latin jazz all stars band concept, but now focused on a specific period of the creative evolvement of Cuban Master Conguero, Mongo Santamaría.

Mongorama is no ordinary band. Its self-mandate of paying tribute to the charanga/jazz musical period extensively explored by Mongo Santamaría and his bandmates, saxophonist Chombo Silva and flautist Rolando Lozano, involves revitalizing Mongo's music and the charanga tradition he helped to develop in his moment. Rizo, as producer and bandleader and musical director Danilo Lozano incorporate new arrangements and orchestrations, modern variations of the themes without losing the essence of the rhythm and the infectious danceability of the music. The hip, jazzy feel exudes throughout the vocal and instrumental deliveries on this recording. Engaging and enjoyable at the same time, *Mongorama* equally pleases the listeners (jazz and

Latin music fans) and the dancers. Great job accomplished by pianist Oscar Hernández with his arrangements, and Francisco Torres as well.

This is an album recorded live-in-studio over a two-days fantastic musical journey. That means the music on this CD has that fresh, spontaneous and improvisational elements inherent to Jazz and Afro-Cuban descargas. This approach works perfectly well for these seasoned, highly-trained cats who proudly follow on the steps of Maestro Mongo Santamaría.



José Rizo's Mongorama

A nine-piece members ensemble, Mongorama brings to the stage great musicianship and sophisticated interpretations. It introduces a magnificent sound to a new generation of listeners who will surely be interested in finding out more about the music of Mongo Santamaría and his “La Sabrosa” charanga ensemble during the sixties and seventies.

Mongorama recreates previously recorded material by Santamaría: **Bacoso** (one of Mongo’s signature tunes featuring Hubert Laws on a superb solo flute, Dayren Santamaría on violin and Joey De Leon on congas); **Las Guajiras** (an overcharged electric guajira reminiscent of the hypnotic Cachao’s descargas, featuring Poncho Sanchez on congas, Danilo Lozano on flute and Adonis Puentes on vocals); **Bluchanga** (a popular Latin jazz composition by Mongo’s pianist Joao Donato, featuring Justo Almario on tenor sax, Oscar Hernández on piano and Joey De Leon on congas); **Palo Mayombe** (a composition by Mongo’s singer, the late Rudy Calzado, featuring Justo Almario on tenor sax and Adonis Puentes on vocals); **Siempre en Tí** (an arousing bolero by master flautist Rolando Lozano, featuring Hubert Laws on flute, Justo Almario on tenor sax and Adonis Puentes on vocals); **Que Maravilloso** (another composition by Rudy Calzado, featuring Oscar Hernández on piano, Ramón Banda on timbales and Adonis Puentes on vocals); **Cruzan** (a beautiful, serene composition by former Santamaría’s pianist Armen Donelian, features Oscar

Hernández on piano and Justo Almario on tenor sax) and *Guajira at the Blackhawk* (one of Mongo's earliest pieces dedicated to the legendary San Francisco club, features Danilo Lozano on flute, Poncho Sanchez on congas, Justo Almario on tenor sax and Adonis Puentes on vocals). José Rizo contributes two of his own compositions: *Así es la Vida* (where Adonis Puentes shines on vocals, Poncho Sanchez is featured on congas and Danilo Lozano on flute) and *Bubba Boogaloo*, a joyful theme that gets a special treatment on the soulful voice of the gracious Destani Wolf. Both tracks are masterfully arranged and co-composed by Francisco Torres. *No Molestes Mas*, found its way in through an early Ray Barreto's recording. This swinging tune is a true delicacy for the dancers, making your feet move at the first notes. The album closes with *Tin Marín*, a traditional tune inspired by the Cachao *Cuban Jam Sessions in Miniature* legendary recordings (featuring René Camacho on bass, Freddie Crespo on vocals, Ramón Banda on timbales and Danilo Lozano on flute).

Kudos to Rizo for an impeccable, very professional presentation. Avid readers and serious listeners are always looking for liner notes that are at the same time informative and educational. That's exactly the case with this album.

Tracks listing: 1. Bacoso; 2. Asi Es La Vida; 3. Las Guajiras; 4. Bluchanga; 5. No Molestes Mas; 6. Bubba Boogaloo; 7. Palo Mayombe; 8. Siempre En Ti; 9. Que Maravilloso; 10. Cruzan; 11. Guajira At the Blackhawk; 12. Tin Marin.

Personnel: Alfredo Ortiz (vocals, guiro); Adonis Puentes, Freddie Crespo, Destani Wolf (vocals); Dayren Santamaria (violin); Danilo Lozano, Hubert Laws (flute); Justo Almario (tenor saxophone); Alberto Salas, Oscar Hernandez (piano); Joey de Leon, Poncho Sanchez (congas); Ramon Banda (timbales).



Mongorama on the web: <http://jazzonthelatinsideallstars.com/index1.html>

Feature/Review written by: [Danilo Navas](#)

Tags: [Adonis Puentes](#), [Alberto Salas](#), [Alfredo Ortiz](#), [Danilo Lozano](#), [Danilo Navas](#), [Dayren Santamaria](#), [Destani Wolf](#), [Freddie Crespo](#), [Hubert Laws](#), [Joey De Leon](#), [Jose Rizo](#), [Justo Almario](#), [Mongorama](#), [Oscar Hernández](#), [Poncho Sanchez](#), [Ramon Banda](#), [Saungu Records](#)