

LATIN

REVIEWS By Héctor Reséndez



VIENE DEL ALMA

■ **RICARDO MONTANER:** *Viene del Alma* (EMI Latin, 24383) Producer: Oscar Gomez. POP ROCK.

His second recording for EMI Latin, Ricardo Montaner has had a successful career as both a singer and composer. With "Viene del Alma," there's a sharp focus on the album's romanticism and Montaner's insightful poetry. Matched with a well-executed musical production by Oscar Gomez, Montaner's style fits like an Armani suit. This album will undoubtedly do as well as all of the international singer's previous works.

■ **SAMY SANDOVAL:** *El Patron De La Cumbia* (NRT, 1031) Producer: Samy Sandoval. TROPICAL/CUMBIA.

From Panama, the sibling act of Samy and Sandra Sandoval started at an early age. Now they're regarded as the "Pimpinela" of tropical music. Samy and Sandra have recorded 40 single records and 3 long-play recordings. *El Patron de la Cumbia* marks their first CD project and gold award (Disco de Oro). They are currently one of Panama's most popular rising artists.



■ **CLARE FISCHER:** *Just Me, Solo Piano Excursions* (Concord, 4679) Producer: Clare Fischer. JAZZ.



Those familiar with the late Cal Tjader will well remember pianist Clare Fischer. On *Just Me*, Fischer treats everyone to a "piano jazz concert (at home)." The solo work was produced at the studio of David Abell Pianos. It was there that Fischer found the grand piano which eventually became a part of his home. There are standards like "Autumn Leaves," "Get-

ting Sentimental Over You," "I'd Do Anything For You," "After You've Gone," "Ill Wind," and "Topsy." Fischer renders an amazing version of the jazz classic "Round Midnight." It is the artist's three original Latin jazz numbers, however, that are intriguing: "Pra Baden," "Guajira," and "Pensativa." Look for Fischer's Concord Picante release *Lembranças* (Remembrances) (CD CCD-4044).

PICK OF THE WEEK

■ **OLGA TANON:** *Exitos y Mas* (WEA Latina, 13090) Producer: Various. TROPICAL/MERENGUE.

Merengue icon, Olga Tañón, finally offers a long-awaited compilation of her greatest hits in *Exitos y Más*. The Puerto Rican singer's album went Platinum in the first week of its release. It contains material from her albums, the Platinum-winning *Sola*, *Mujer de Fuego* which went Double-Platinum, and her most recent album, the Triple-Platinum *Siente El Amor*. Pablo Flores adds his bonus track with the remix "Ya me cansé de ese muchacho malo y mentiroso, y aún pienso que vendrá llorando...pero una noche más y...que se vaya!" One of the best mega-mixes around!



THE LATIN LOWDOWN

News From U.S. & Latin America

By Héctor Reséndez

EMI LATIN'S NEWSLETTER GOES

ENGLISH: To close an astounding year for EMI Latin, the label introduced its Spanish language newsletter, *EMI-Sario*, in an all-English format. The *EMI Times* offers an excellent promotional vehicle for the label. This is especially true as EMI Latin carries forward its intention to introduce those artists, such as Selena and Emilio, for example, with mainstream potential.

José Behar, president of the label, describes his company's pro-active philosophy as being able to "anticipate events and take decisive action as opposed to reacting to circumstances and making last minute adjustments."

The label recently added a Marketing Director, Fernando De Los Reyes, and a Manager of Special Markets, Lupe de la Cruz. Another executive was assigned to develop the label's catalog. International opportunities for the EMI Latin roster is to be overseen by another exec.

ON THE GRAMMY FRONT: Latin pop group and Sony Discos' internationally acclaimed La Mafia plans to release their new album, *Un Millon De Rosas*, on Jan. 30.

The group's current release, *Exitos En Vivo*, recently received a Grammy nomination from NARAS for Best Mexican-American Performance, an album consisting of live performances in Mexico and the United States.

Known for their multiple Gold, Platinum, and Triple Platinum Diamond recordings, La Mafia has been garnering accolades since the mid-80s. Their last studio recording *Vida* also acquired a Grammy nomination in 1995.

After the release of *Un Millon De Rosas*, the group will embark on a major tour throughout Mexico and the U.S.

HANSEL AND RAUL REUNION: The return of the Salsa duo of Hansel and Raul was recently confirmed in Miami. The pair were signed by Sony Discos' v.p./GM, George Zamora.



(Standing L-R): George Zamora, v.p./GM, Sony Discos; José Luis Piloto, A&R director, Sony Discos; Harry Fox, sales & marketing v.p., Sony Discos. (Seated L-R): Hansel, Raul, and Fernando Beltran, promo v.p., Sony Discos.

NEW VIDEO RELEASES BY RMM: New videos by RMM's Salsa artists were recently released, per word from the label's publicity director, Debra Mercado. There's Marc Anthony with his single "Nadie Como Ella" from his Triple Platinum award-winning album *Todo A Su Tiempo* on RMM's Soho Latino label. The album has been nominated for a Grammy in the Tropical Music category. The actor-singer offers his best video performance as being completely enamored with a beautiful woman.

The Barry White of the Salsa world, Tito Nieves, has an interestingly humorous video, "No Me Vuelvo A Enamorar" from his RMM album *Un Tipo Comun*. Nieves plays a blue collar worker who wins the lottery and new attention from a woman who once spurned him.

Finally, Van Lester offers a festive video with fellow artists Ray Castro and David Navedo of the group Conjunto Clásico as well as Hilton Ruiz, Ray Sepúlveda, and others. The single is "A Mi Fiesta." Both Lester and Nieves' videos were produced, directed and edited by Eddie Harris and his company Visual Insight.

ON THE MEXICAN MUSIC SCENE: Mexican singer, Gildardo Alvarez, has released a single, "Hoy Te Extraño," on the indie California Music in Chula Vista, CA. The mariachi ballad was produced by Chuck Anderson who has worked with such talents as Juan Gabriel, Paloma San Basilio, Pandora, Alvaro Torres, Rodó Durcal and many others. Alvarez has been receiving air play and has been making TV appearances. The Toluca Lake-based Uno Productions is providing independent promotion of the artist.