

Opinion

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Jazz

- **Jorge Martínez Zapata Festival**
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- **Cris van Beuren and Juan Pablo Villa**
- **Gustavo Cortiñas**

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In order to commemorate the first year of the passing of master Jorge Martínez Zapata (La Jornada, 09/10/2013), musicians, artists, and cultural authorities of San Luis Potosí have just established the Jorge Martínez Zapata International Jazz Festival, to be celebrated from September 11 to 13 at the Teatro de la Paz, the Plazoleta del Carmen and the Center for the Arts of the capital city.

Convened and motivated by the immense and intense legacy of Martínez Zapata as pianist, composer, researcher, writer, and educator, several national and foreign jazz players and aficionados have been selected as part of the three-day programming that includes concerts, workshops, clinics and conferences. Among them, a few stand out, such as the Justo Almarino Quartet, the Mark Levine Trio, the Costa Rica Saxophone Quartet, **Guillermo Barrón's group** and an impressive band called Música Integral, under the direction of Samuel Martínez Herrera, who will interpret the music for this project conceived by Martínez Zapata in 1969, in which he was already merging huasteco sones, Jalisco sones, sones from the Itsmo, and jarocho music with jazz elements and contemporary music.

The book Music is like this will also be presented, edited by the government of the state, in which the honored pianist exposed his principles for music appreciation. Furthermore, Alberto Gutiérrez, an important cornerstone in the promotion of jazz on the radio here in San Luis Potosí, will offer a conference about the work of Martínez Zapata on such media. All details can be found on Facebook, on the Festival's page.

And speaking of **Guillermo Barrón**, the young percussionist from Xalapa presented his first album as a soloist, *¿Cuál es la prisa?* (Luna Cabal, 2014), with the support of congas, bata drums, timbals, djembé, udu and a long list of other minor percussive instruments. We already knew that Guillermo was a first-class instrumentalist, but the big surprise was realizing he is also a solid, eloquent composer, with great expressivity in his musical lines, and a narrative coherence that seduces the listener from the first chords.

There are also three arrangements of great magnitude: Solar, by Miles Davis; A child is born, by Thad Jones; and Oleo, a classic by Sonny Rollins that in this new version gains a special strength, both in the rhythmic patterns and in the collective improvisation, where Samuel Martínez' organ reclaims the power of a tool almost forgotten by contemporaries.

¿Cuál es la prisa?, the second single of the album, unfolds passion and technique, and traces of Mexico. ¿Cuál es la prisa?, the album, is a superb recording debut by one of the best percussionists of our jazz.

I wouldn't want to become too serious nor too obvious, but jazz is and will continue to be a universe in itself, with its own infinite possibilities to do and redo and undo and start all over. But it is also a gate to access other dynamics and other universes and other infinite possibilities, and that is how Cris van Beuren and Juan Pablo Villa came through in order to land an album as a duet: Flucturas (Intolerancia, 2014).

Here the songs fluctuate between van Beuren's jazz baggage (with soft lines by Egberto Gismonti in the guitar), and Juan Pablo's multiform and uneven improvisations (in the best of senses), along with his vocal arsenal.

But from the rigors of orthodoxy, we would have to note that Flucturas is not a jazz album. Rather, it is a mixture of intentions and fragrances that in other latitudes could be opposed, even confronted to each other, but here... here they come together with elegance and they feed off each other naturally.

Eleven of the seventeen songs –all written by van Beuren make up a catalog of subtleties that pair face to face with ambient music and new age echoes. The six remaining songs are a series of improvised vignettes where the vein and irreverence of Villa are more than evident. The album closes with a blues lullaby.

Gustavo Cortiñas, Mexican drummer based in Chicago, with a solid style of echoes straight ahead and contemporary jazz, will begin a tour on September 12 through Puebla and the Valle de México. The clubs in which he'll play are: La Casa del Mendrugo Jazzatlán, Las Musas de Papá Sibarita, New Orleans, Be Bop City, EL Convite, Film Club Café, Esquina de los Milagros, Zinco and Pizza Jazz. Details here.

Cortiñas, in the words of music critic Johnny Vidacovich, does not play the drums with his brain, but his soul and heart. We are all invited. Cheers.

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