

Mp3 Pablo Menendez - Havana Blues Mambo



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Unique mix of Afro-Cuban rhythms, jazz, blues, and rock - debut release by California-born, Havana based guitarist Pablo Menendez 10 MP3 Songs JAZZ: Latin Jazz, WORLD: World Fusion Details: In the last several decades, the level of international dominance which Cuban musicians have achieved in Jazz, Latin and related musical genres, has been quite out of proportion to this island's population of approximately ten million people. Even within this rich and diverse crowd of fantastically talented and creative musicians, Pablo Menendez' story stands out as colorful and unique. Pablo was born in Oakland, California, son of the well known blues and folk singer Barbara Dane. Pablo came to study in Havana in the 1960's. In 1970, he joined the seminal Grupo de Experimentación Sonora del ICAIC (i.e. the experimental sound collective of the Cuban Film Institute) which was known for its experimental fusion of Cuban genres with North American, Brazilian and Classical styles. At the Film Institute, he composed film music and Cuban jazz / rock fusion pieces, as well as arranging songs by the band's singer-songwriters Pablo Milans, Silvio Rodríguez and Sara González. After this decisive experience, Pablo Menendez worked in two equally important bands. The first was Sonido Contemporáneo, led by sax player Nicolás Reinoso. It functioned as the "house band" at the "El Ro" club, the center of the Cuban jazz scene of the '70s and a good part of the '80s. Another alumnus of that band was pianist Gonzalo Rubalcaba! The other band was Carlos Alfonso's group, Síntesis which achieved a very sophisticated fusion of elements of Nueva Trova, Rock and Jazz Rock, with Afro-Cuban Yoruba music. In the minds of most of his Cuban and international audience, however, Pablo is most closely associated with Mezcla, the fantastic Afro-Cuban Jazz rock septet he founded in 1985. Pablo has been leading Mezcla to the present day, on countless gigs in Cuba, many international tours to Europe and the U.S., and on several critically acclaimed recordings. Pablo also opened the way, in the mid '90s, for other Cuban musicians to tour the United States. When Mezcla's

visas were denied in 1993, U.S. public opinion and various members of Congress mobilized to protest. Among the protesters was the legendary guitarist Carlos Santana, the spearhead of Latin Rock, who stated in an interview with the San Francisco Examiner that Mezcla was his favorite band from Cuba. When Pablo traveled to San Francisco without the visa-less band to perform at the Encuentro del Canto Popular Festival, Santana joined Pablo onstage. Although it was the first time they had played together and there was no rehearsal, Pablo says "it was as if we had been playing together forever and knew each other's minds: different ways of speaking the same language. But what more can I say about Carlos, one of the all-time great artists of the guitar!" Chucho Valds' Mambo Influenciado is one of the great standards in contemporary Cuban music. "Since most recordings of this song I know are based on the piano, I wanted to do a guitar version, short and fast!", Pablo explains. Akete Oba Oba is an instrumental version of an old Yoruba chant that Pablo arranged for the album Mezcla did in 1991 with Lazaro Ros, the famous singer of Cuban Yoruba song, "Cantos: Lazaro Ros Mezcla." In the over 500 year-old tradition of Regla de Ocha religion, it is a song to the Orisha or God "Obatal". La Gitana could be described as a piece of Flamenco-Cuban Jazz fusion! It was written by Miguel Miranda who has the rather unique talent of playing bass and congas, at the same time! This song was inspired by Pablo's sister Nina who is a great Flamenco singer. Sueo con Serpientes and Quien Fuera are instrumental versions of a couple of Pablo's favorite songs by one of Cuba's - and the whole Spanish language's - most important singer-songwriters, Silvio Rodriguez. Bonnie's Blues Mambo was written by Pablo in 1999, in tribute to blues singer and guitarist Bonnie Raitt. Bonnie visited Cuba and met Pablo in 1999 as part of the "Bridge to Havana" songwriting workshop, with a group of 40 North American, English and Irish songwriters visiting the island. The visitors teamed up with an equal number of Cuban songwriters to write songs together. "Names were drawn from a hat - a real hat!" Pablo remembers. "I drew my dream team, Bonnie Raitt and actor / rocker Woody Harrelson, plus ace Cuban guitarist Rey Guerra." One of the high points of the concert done by all the artists at the end of that historic week was Bonnie, Pablo, actor Woody Harrelson and guitarist Rey Guerra performing their song "Cuba's Way Too Cool". Their other song, "La Brisa Azul" is on the recently released "Bridge to Havana" album. "Bonnie has always been one of my favorite artists. I admire and respect her so much! Now she has become a good friend, too. She told me that my mother, singer Barbara Dane, was one of her main inspirations to sing and play guitar as she does! ", adds Pablo. This track is a loose blues jam with Pablo playing all instruments except bass and

maracas. "When I do 'Round Midnight live", Pablo laughs, "I tell the audience we are going to do an "old time Cuban bolero" by "Telonio el Monje", and then we do our version of Thelonius Monk's great standard. Bi-lingual Jazz freaks get the joke... We have fun!" Grifo is a tune Pablo wrote in 1972 after hearing and meeting John McLaughlin in New York, and hearing the first Mahavishnu Orchestra album. "I wanted to do a "son" in 7/4 time", recalls Pablo. "I first recorded Grifo with the Grupo de Experimentacion Sonora in about 1973..." Hijos de la Mezcla was also written in 1972. It has an unusual structure in that the theme is eleven bars long, in 12/8 rhythm. Pablo remembers, "I was inspired from listening to bat drums played by Master Drummer Ol Bat Jess Prez around 1967 or so. This gave me the idea for the basic guitar part you hear in the introduction..." Leonardo Acosta Produced by Pablo Menendez. All recording and mixing: Victor Mil. Computer programming and editing: Juan Carlos Ricard. Mastering: John Shyloski at the Carriage House, Stamford, CT. Package design: 3 and Co., New York. threeandco Executive producer: Joachim Becker.

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