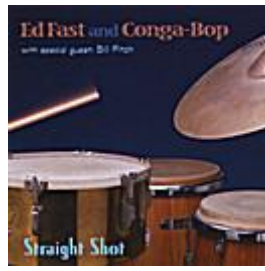


# Mp3 Ed Fast And Conga-Bop - Straight Shot



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Conga-Bop combines the harmony and sensibilities of hard-bop with the rhythms of the Caribbean to produce an original and vibrant sound that is latin and jazz. 9 MP3 Songs LATIN: Latin Jazz, JAZZ: Latin Jazz Details: Here is the most recent review of "Straight Shot" along with an artist bio from Owen McNally (Jazz Critic) of the Hartford Courant ... Ed Fast, a globetrotting sideman based in Hartford, has just released an album that displays not only his skill as a percussionist but also as a first-rate composer, arranger and bandleader in his own right. A swinging Latin jazz festival in CD format, Ed Fast and Conga-Bop's "Straight Shot" (produced by Ed Fast Music) consists of nine selections featuring such stalwarts as trombonist Steve Davis and Hartford's brilliant, increasingly famous Curtis brothers, Zaccai on piano and Luques on bass. Fast wrote five compositions, varying the mix of the CD's writing credits with contributions by Davis, special guest Bill Fitch (a legendary but sadly under-recorded Latin percussionist), plus two standards, including Lee Morgan's "Boy What a Night." Besides getting to show off his composing skills, Fast displays his famed versatility on drums, timbales, congas and vibes. Along with solid charts, there's good collective chemistry and soloing depth here with contributions from, among others, trumpeter/flugelhornist Joel Gonzalez, saxophonist/flutist Chris Herbert and guitarist Greg Skaff. "I've worked with these guys and been friends for many years, so my band, Conga-Bop, is really like a family. And I think that kind of personal relationship shows through in the warmth of the music," Fast says from California, where he's on tour with a road show starring dancer/singer/actress Chita Rivera. Fast's versatility - a quality that was instilled in him by his Hartt School mentor, the celebrated percussionist Al Lepak - makes him as comfortable in a Broadway pit band as he is with a symphony orchestra. He toured Russia with the road company of "42nd Street," and played in Japan, China and South Korea with "The Sound of Music." At Shanghai's House of Blues, Fast's Latin percussion wizardry made such a powerful

impression that the house manager invited him back for an extended stint. And in Moscow, the Connecticut Yankee and his fellow sidemen wound up entertaining at a New Year's Eve bash for upscale Muscovite revelers. Fast credits his success with support he's gotten along the way, beginning with his first teacher, Ernest Centoscudi, who was principal percussionist with the U.S. Coast Guard Band. Fast, who was born in Albany, N.Y., moved with his family at age 9 to Old Lyme where he later hooked up with Centoscudi as a student in love with Latin jazz. "He was the one who got me going on all the percussion instruments, not just the drum set but the marimba, timpani, etc. And he was the one who hipped me to Lepak." Lepak was not only a venerable percussion pedagogue at the Hartt School and the author of much-respected textbooks on percussion, but also a composer/arranger and nationally noted player in all styles. As a percussion maven, Lepak was as much at home in Hollywood studios as he was during his 56-year stint as timpanist with the Hartford Symphony Orchestra. Lepak's stress on mastery and versatility, Fast says, "has paid off in spades for me." "It's given me opportunities I'd never have, including a whole year's stint playing drums for Chitty Chitty Bang Bang,' which was not only a tremendous paycheck, but got me in on the New York scene. Besides doing the show every night, I was playing Latin jazz in different venues there as well," he says. He also credits Paul Landerman, Hartford's celebrated society bandleader and booking agent. "I did many shows at the Bushnell when Paul was the contractor there, starting with Robert Goulet in Man of La Mancha.' That experience has been invaluable. It led to connections that got me gigs ranging from Russia to Broadway to China," Fast says. Although both Lepak and Landerman are retired, Fast remains close to both of these grand patriarchs of the Hartford music scene. Even today after gigs in the Hartford area, Fast says, he still sometimes stops by late at night at Lepak's home in Windsor just to unwind and visit with his old mentor and his wife, Charlotte. Similarly, he maintains his warm, family-like ties with Landerman, the former entertainment mogul who celebrates his 91st birthday April 19 at his new home in West Hartford. Fast's new album is available on the internet at [cdbabyand](#) at La Paloma Sabanera, 405 Capitol Ave., Hartford, or through him at his website, [edfastmusic.com](#). Celebrating the release of his album, Fast and his sidemen perform April 28 at a CD release party at La Paloma.

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