

## Mp3 Los Gatos - Insight



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Hard hitting, no nonsense, and guaranteed to make you dance, dance, dance. Features Mambos, Cha-Cha-Cha, Pachangas, Boleros, Samba, Afro Cuban 6/8, and more. 16 MP3 Songs

**LATIN: Latin Jazz, LATIN: Afro-Cuban Details:** PKO Records proudly presents Insight, the latest CD from Ann Arbor's highly acclaimed Latin jazz ensemble Los Gatos. The brainchild of drummer and multi-percussionist Pete Siers, Los Gatos has performed every Thursday night at Ann Arbor's Firefly Club since 2001. With Insight, Los Gatos celebrates its tenth year as a working band and its second CD for PKO Records. Insight is a brilliant compilation of elegant boleros, delightful pachangas, fiery mambos, relaxed cha cha chas, and exotic, 6/8 Afro/Cuban dance music. This well-crafted and polished project showcases the incredible musical talents of the bandmembers: timballero Pete Siers and conguero Al DiBlassio, vibraphonist Cary Kocher, pianist Brian DiBlassio and bassist Kurt Krahnke. Los Gatos is built from the "old-school" Latin jazz values set forth by Cal Tjader, Mongo Santamaria, Tito Puente and Joe Cuba. However, unlike many traditional Latin jazz groups with six or more members, Los Gatos is a quintet, a combination which dramatically exposes the function of each component of the band. Los Gatos' use of call-and-response vocal coro sections throughout their repertoire lifts the music to new heights of soulfulness and drama. Al DiBlassio puts every fiber of his being into his solo vocals, supported splendidly by the other four singing members of the group. The vocals add an authentic sound and dimension to this band. Following their successful live recording *Cat's Got Your Tongue*, Insight reflects the growth of the band as a cohesive unit and the development of the individual players through a deeper understanding of ensemble, groove and music history. This excellent studio recording leaps right out of the speakers in rich, full, clean stereophonic sound. Each instrument can be heard optimally and the blend of the components is perfect. Insight is a recording that you will want to park in your home or car CD player. The program: 1. Much like

an organized yet chaotic storm, Huracn has a well-defined beginning, middle and end, with contrasting sections working with and against each other. Pianist Brian DiBlassio plays an outstanding solo filled with imagery and sheer power. Fantastic! Huracn is written by Michigan native Clare Fischer, one of the greatest keyboardists in jazz and Latin music and a favorite composer of Los Gatos. 2. Pancho's Seis Por Ocho is a 6/8 composition by Eddie Palmieri, one of the grandfathers of Latin jazz and another inspirational figure for Los Gatos. The complex interplay between the melody and the traditional 6/8 rhythm requires accuracy and concentration. Los Gatos performed this tune in tribute to Eddie Palmieri when they opened for him in Ann Arbor in 2004. That led to Pete Siers spending a week with Palmieri's band at a workshop in Vermont. 3. Con Su Bataola is a vocal feature for Al DiBlassio. The lyrics warn of social stereotyping; Al delivers the wisdom with a beautiful yet gravelly voice. The tune was written by charanga bandleader Jose Estvez, aka Joe Loco, another one of Los Gatos' musical heroes. Two interesting side-notes to listen for in Con Su Bataola are #1) the interplay connecting the ensemble sections and #2) the use of big band arranging techniques that are still very effective when reduced to a small group format. 4. Novios is another fascinating Clare Fischer composition that straddles the line between bolero and cha-cha-cha. The bridge section is a study in complex harmony, complete with irregular bass lines that propel the rhythm forward. Novios is a perfect tune for the vibraphone and Cary Kocher's solo reinforces the moody quality of this piece. 5. The merengue Donde Est El Corazon asks the musical question, "Where Is Your Heart? Petes answer is loud and clear: "Our heart is in this music! The more we research, understand, live and love this music, the more it captures our imagination and lifts our collective spirit. The tunes that touch us most deeply are the tunes that combine complexity and simplicity, unisons and harmonies, freedom and responsibility into a thing of beauty that is far greater than the sum of its individual parts." 6. El Muchacho was written by H. Owen Reed, a professor of music at Michigan State University. Los Gatos expanded Clare Fischer's original arrangement to feature improvised piano and timbale solos in 7/4 time. Pianist Brian DiBlassio negotiates meter changes and challenging rhythms between the right and left hand with a groove that belies the complexity of the task. 7. The title of the classic Latin bolero Tres Palabras translates literally to Three Words. Three words that accurately describe this piece are lyrical, emotional and articulate. Cary Kocher puts his unique personal stamp on this one with an intelligent yet heart-felt solo. Like several other tracks on the disc, Tres Palabras is compact yet conceptually complete, seductive, tasteful, and very catchy. 8. The title track

Insight is the culmination of all things Los Gatos. This euphoric mambo arrangement includes open blowing over progressively higher plateaus, colorful backgrounds that frame and elevate each solo, explosive rhythmic fireworks and tutti figures that combine the timbres of the respective instruments into a new sound.

9. Brian DiBlassios arrangement of My Reverie by nineteenth century, French, impressionist composer Claude Debussy was inspired by vibraphonist Cal Tjader, but evolved backwards to include even more of Debussy's original intent. The opening is a spirited call-and-response between piano and vibes. This version of My Reverie reflects European musical roots through the prism of twentieth century Cuban culture.

10. Dime Con Quin Andas is another vocal feature for Al in the pachanga style. It is a social commentary on "local gossip" explaining, "Tell me who you run with and I'll tell you who you are."

11. Eddie Palmieri's Samba Do Sueo has a Brazilian flair and recalls Palmieri's collaborations with Cal Tjader in the 1960s. This medium tempo samba makes effective use of the shaker, played by Pete, and the surdo drum, played by Al. Unfettered simplicity is the key to this deceptively sophisticated work of art.

12. Gringo City is composed by the great Puerto Rican master percussionist and bandleader Tito Puente. Blazing solos by Brian and Cary develop and crescendo into an ensemble riff that explodes into the climatic coda. Not bad for five gringos from Michigan!

13. Key Largo is adapted from the original 1966 big band chart featuring Cal Tjader. Key Largo has become a favorite bolero of Los Gatos and their loyal fans. Check out the tender vibraphone obligato as the tune fades into the sunset.

14. Tu Crees Que? (translation: "Do You Really Think So?") is another pachanga from Mongo Santamaria. Al sings his heart out on this upbeat party tune. Pete says, "Tu Crees Que? reminds us of the great New York ballrooms and Latin dancing styles of the 1950s. A large portion of the Los Gatos presentation is dedicated to pleasing our dancing patrons. This has given us a clearer "insight" into the importance and relevance of the social aspects of this music. Your first dance lesson is illustrated on the back of the Insight CD package."

15. Bassist Kurt Krahnke contributes solid support throughout this CD. Kurt is a very special bassist who is equally comfortable playing jazz, Latin, funk, rock or any other style he is called upon to perform. His bass lines on Clare Fischer's Funquiado supply the necessary thrust to power this very groovy tune into orbit.

16. Manila is a Mongo Santamaria composition, inspired by his first trip to the Philippine Islands. Los Gatos celebrates the influence of Mongo, Tjader and the charanga style of Joe Loco in their arrangement. =

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