

panama!2

Latin Sounds, Cumbia Tropical & Calypso Funk on the Isthmus 1967-77





Front Cover Los Exciters This Page Los Exciters and the reigning "Miss Soul" at the Carnavales in Panama City

This is the second of two CDs/LPs in the Panama series, An abbreviated version of the contextual information from the first Panama LP appears below followed by new material - please see the first Panama CD/LP for the full story.

Panamá is located at the very end of Central America, but has more in common culturally with the Caribbean (the Antilles) and South America. Panama's radically multicultural society got a jump start in the 1850s as North American interests seeking a faster route to the gold fields in California imported West Indian (Afro-Antillean) labor to do the dangerous job of building a railway from the Atlantic to the Pacific coasts. More Afro-Antillean and Chinese workers were imported to undertake the first canal project, funded by the French. The effort failed spectacularly, and by the turn of the century North American financiers engineered a coup that gave Panamá independence from Colombia and the United States control of the Canal Zone in perpetuity.

Completed in 1914, The North American Canal Project was truly a feat of immense proportions; sponsoring a worker migration wave of around 150,000 in the decade of 1904-1914 and costing some 25-30,000 workers' lives in the end. Greeks, Lebanese, Spaniards, Chinese, Irish, Salvadorans and Hindus all came to work in the young country, but the overwhelming portion of workers entering Panamá from 1880 to 1915 were Afro-Antilleans from Jamaica, Barbados, Martinique and Trinidad. Many did not return to the islands, but remained and settled on Panamanian soil.



Ceferino Nieto and his Conjunto Bella Luna

The Afro-Antillean experience in Panamá was one of daily discrimination in pay, housing, and access to public resources. Afro-Antillean and Panamanian Mestizo "Silver Roll" workers in the U.S. Canal Zone made exactly half what a white "Gold Roll" worker made for the same job. Separate colored and white bathrooms and water fountains added daily insult to injury, and even in Protestant churches the faithful were separated by color. It has been said that the Canal Zone was administered as a 51st state, and one in the racist deep south at that. Panamá's musical legacy is a product of both the rich mixture of cultures its population encompasses and its geographically central location. Directly to the south of Panamá is Colombia, whose tradition of cumbia and vallenato featuring accordian and hand-held scraper deeply influenced Panamá's own musica típica (Mestizo folk music). To the east are the Antilles, from which workers and sailors brought not only the Afro-Cuban majesty of the son, rumba, guaracha and guaguanco, but also the work songs (which were a large part of the soundtrack of the canal's construction) and mento/proto-calypto of the Jamaicans and Trinidadians. From the north, Mexican soldiers brought rancheras and boleros, foxtrots and military marches, while Afro-American jazz and gospel music (Afro-Antilleans were observant Protestants) was brought from the port at New Orleans - a short distance away.

Panamá's population was concentrated in the port cities at either end of the canal: Colon on the Atlantic coast, and Panamá City on the Pacific. Thanks to the patronage of the Afro-Antillean residents of Colon and a steady flow of U.S. army and navy personnel, a vibrant scene of local jazz and calypso groups was already in place by the late 1930s. By the mid '40s, bebop had arrived, and big band guaracha and mambo orchestras such as Armando Boza's famous "La Perfecta" were dominant, backing the original Sonero Mayor, Bery Moré, at the Carnavales in Colon and touring with him to Peru. Two brilliant musicians/composers/arrangers/ from this era included orchestra leader Clarence Martin, inventor of the "matambo" rhythm (mambo plus

tamborera) and Victor Boa, Panamá's "high priest of jazz".

The big Latin bands downsized in the 1960s, as latin jazz and early salsa bloomed. Maximo Rodríguez y sus Estrellas featuring singer Manito Johnson and swinging pianist Mane Nieto, and fiery Dominican-born latin jazz trumpet player Rafael Labasta's Orquesta played at jumping spots like the Rancho Grande nightclub or the Teatro Apolo. One of the most popular of all Panamanian groups throughout the late 1960s and early '70s was Bush y sus Magníficos, led by timbalero Francisco "Bush" Buckley and featuring Anel Sanders on bongos, Harold "Shazam" Patterson on congas and Luis "Freddy" Anglin on bass. Another Panamanian musician who played with Bush early on was the now world-famous singer/composer Ruben Blades, who had a number of hits with a local group called los Salvajes del Ritmo.

Throughout this period, Panamá stood right alongside Cali, Colombia and Caracas, Venezuela as important and especially fertile centers of urban Afro-Latin music. Many new recordings of New York's Tico, Alegre and Fania labels were test marketed in Panamá: the reasoning went, if they could pass the crowds in Panamá, they could make it anywhere.

The new generation that came of age in the late '50s was also raised on the latest 45s of early doo-wop, soul and rock 'n' roll. Thus were the seeds of the soul-influenced Combos Nacionales sown: inspired by the Platters, the Ink Spots, the Drifters and Frankie Lymon, four- or five-man singing groups backed by a single guitar emerged with names like the Golden Boys, the Bell Tones, the Twilights, the Lyrics, and Ernie King and the Crowns. By the late '60s, the Afro-American Black Power movement had instant repercussions among the Afro-Antillean youth. In 1968, a revolt led by Lieutenant Colonel Omar Torrijos ousted President Arnulfo Arias, a guardian of the elite, opening doors in education, commerce and culture to the long-excluded black population.

The musical creativity that blossomed during this

period was staggering: somewhere around fifty individual groups, often grouped together as the Combos Nacionales, appeared in the 1967-1975 period. Almost overnight, the Panamanian public seemed to have found a music that represented their diverse tastes and experiences: favorite groups such as the Silvertones, the Festivals, the Exciters, the Beachers, the Mozambique, the Soul Fantastics and the Goombays appeared on local television and were booked for engagements all over the country. As lovers of all colors were glued together on the dance floor, the Combos Nacionales' music proved the cement for a generation's progress from Afro-Antillean, Chinese, or Latino to simply "Panamanian".

Panamanian Música Típica

That Panamanian música típica (also known as típica or pindín) is very similar to the Colombian cumbia and vallenato makes perfect sense: Panamá was originally part of Colombia, and indeed was once referred to as "Colombia's black province". Pre-accordion forms of cumbia are still played in Panamá's remote Darien region by groups consisting of drums and maracas, hands and voices. But the heartland of música típica - called *el Interior* - includes Ocu, Herrera, Guararé, Aguadulce and Los Santos, all located in the hot, dry central provinces that lay between Panama City and the border with Costa Rica to the Northwest. When I traveled through the interior looking for radio stations that had not thrown out their vinyl, I ran into some of the very beautiful music that appears on this compilation.

One of the striking features of música típica is its' consistently hot percussion: in essence, Típica is black and mestizo country music. An array of rustic-looking drums are used by Típica percussionists, but the main drums are the tambor, a one-headed drum held tight by rope and pegs, shaped something like the cuban tumbadora or conga; a thinner version of the same drum called the repicador, which makes a dry, sharp sound, and various versions of a rimmed two-headed military-style drum made entirely of wood, called the



Los Superiores



caja. Among the versions of the caja, some have no rims, while others are as large as barrels of beer with a correspondingly deep sound. Both scrapers (churucas or guiros) and maracas are important elements in the polyrhythmic mix that is música típica.

While violins and small four and five-stringed wooden guitars are used in the folkloric versions of pindín, the defining modern instrument of choice is the accordion. The most famous típica conjuntos were led by true masters of that instrument: Dorindo Cardenas, Teresin Jaen, Osvaldo Ayala and Ulpiano Vergara are the names of but a few. The song forms they executed come with a bewildering array of names, but I often see three main categories on 45rpm labels: punto, cumbia, and tambor, which are sometimes further defined by terms that explain their pace, or the specific region they come from. For example, a tambor could be a tambor norte or a tamborera, a cumbia could be a porro cumbia or a danzón cumbia. Puntos are more traditionally Spanish in form, generally sung as décimas (ten-line stanzas) in singing duels called controversias, very similar to those found throughout Latin America (Cf. the culture of the Cuban guajiro). The tamborito, on the other hand, is pure call and response percussion and singing, generally sung by a chorus of women who keep time with handclaps and percussion.

Much of the folkloric base of Típica music is associated with the popular Carnaval fiestas celebrated during the three days before Ash Wednesday. The carnavales include dances, comparsas (which author Alejo Carpentier called a "marching ballet"), and practical jokes such as the *mojadera*, the tradition of throwing cold water on someone's back which has since evolved into large scale water battles. Carnaval queens in their lovely polleras (spanish/moorish-style dresses) are celebrated annually as the *tunas* - groups of often inebriated youth - dance and sing in the streets until dawn. Music is provided by small típica conjuntos, or by larger groups called murgas, which in effect are típica orchestras (despite Willie Colon's celebrated song *La Murga de Panama* that described the murga as a



Los Soul Fantasticos

dance or rhythm). Another unforgettable sight at carnaval involves the stunning masked dancers called the *diablicos sucios* or "dirty little devils", which remind one of nothing less than Japanese animation figures.

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, many Panamanians from *el Interior* moved to Panama City looking for employment, often settling just outside of town in then still-rural areas like San Miguelito and La Chorrera. Many classic recordings date from this era, showcasing the lovely and haunting female lead vocals that are a feature of *Tipica* music. Inevitably, some of the *Tipica* music was popular among Afro-Panamanians as well, and many Afro-Panamanian musicians covered popular *tipica* songs in their own recording sessions.

Volume 2 of *Panamá!* includes another diverse cross-section of the incredible music created in Panamá in the late 1960s and early '70s, most of which was engineered by one man, the brilliant Eduardo "Balito" Chan, and it is to him that this compilation is dedicated.

ROBERTO ERNESTO GYEMANT

Coli, Colombia
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Maximo Rodriguez y Sus Estrellas with singer Manito Johnson



01

LA MURGA DE PANAMA

PAPI BRANDAO Y SU CONJUNTO AIRES TABLEÑOS

from the *Brandao 45*, 1972

(Willie Colón)

Tamborera

3:0

A murga is a traveling folkloric orchestra of Panamanian música típica. Willie Colón wrote this song as if there existed a genre called "the Murga of Panama", but Willie's song, justly famous in the world of salsa as sung by Hector LaVoe, is really a Puerto Rican bomba. In one of those beautiful re-cyclings of popular art, the song was then reinterpreted by Panamanian típica musicians. That famous trombone hook sounds great on Papi Brandao's accordion; Papi was deeply influenced by Afrocaruban music, and was the first to use the stand-up bass in típica music. Papi's conjunto also used Afrocaruban percussion instruments - tumbadoras (conga drums) and timbales - alongside típica instruments, a revolutionary development at the time.

02

TAMBORITO SWING

LOS SILVERTONES

from the *Padisco 45 P-474-A*, 1969

(Ricardo Bermudez)

Tamborito

3:40

Tamborito Swing is the greatest innovation of the entire Combos Nacionales movement - that's the opinion of Eric Gonzalez, Panamanian editor of the seminal Latin music history site *Herencia Latina*, and he may be right. The Tamborito and Tamborera are Panamanian folkloric musical forms associated with música típica. They are uptempo, bouncy and of course percussion-driven. "Tambor" means drum. Here the Silvertones, heirs to the Afro-Antillean musical traditions of Colón, interpret this típica form with their electric guitar and two-saxophone front line. The saxes (Ricardo Bermudez, Eugenio Dodge)

execute something like what the accordion plays in música típica, with drummer Robert Cole executing rolls and hitting the hi-hat in the fashion of a traditional cumbia. Carlos Allen and Joe Clark sing.

03

FLORA

MAXIMO RODRIGUEZ Y SUS ESTRELLAS PANAMEÑAS

from the *Lou LP Los Generales - Maximo Rodriguez y sus Estrellas Panameñas Desde Nueva York Cantando Manito Johnson (El Unicorn)*, 1968

(D.R.)

Guaguancó

3:51

Thunder. The tightest band in Panamá was formed by members of Armando Boza's big band to work when Boza was not booked. Director Maximo Rodriguez played bass and sang. Rafael Labasta and Pablo Vega are on trumpet. Manuel "Diablo" Gonzalez is on timbales while "Plomo" (Tomas Espinosa Lopez) plays the tumbadora. Other key members of the group were Mane Nieto, the swiftest of Antillean pianists, and strong-voiced singer Manito Johnson (on coro here). According to Bush, Puerto Rican bandleader Kako plays bongó on this recording, which was done in New York City. In 1963-64 Maximo and his Estrellas toured Cali and Bogotá, recording the LP *Ritmo y Alegria* in Cali. From 1965 to 1968 they headlined at Panama City's Rancho Grande venue - old timers' eyes glisten remembering those nights. Though little known to the mainstream "salsa" world, the original Lou pressing of this LP is very hard to find.

04

DECIDETE MI AMOR

PAPI BRANDAO Y SU EJECUTIVOS

from the *Discos Brandao 45*

(Modesto Calderon)

San Guaracha

2:59

I could not wait to do volume two of the Panamá series, just to have this song on it. This Roberto "Papi" Brandao offering, along with *Piculina* and *Ceferino En Salsa*, are ample evidence of what Panamanian típica musicians were capable of when inspired by Afrocaruban or "salsa" song forms. There is something in the way Papi's bassist was feeling the guaracha, but the pensive guitar style and snaky, almost Ethiopian (Brian DiGenti's description) feel in the scraper and percussion puts it over the top for me. I can't get enough. It sounds like Papi was listening to a lot of Ismael Rivera, as he loves to imitate Maelo's little verbal flourishlike "maribelen" and "que chimbaro". *Decidete Mi Amor* is the classic (Latin) male's plaintive call: *Decidete mi amor, ya no puedo mas resistir, si tu no me he de querer, por eso voy a morir* (Make a decision my love, I can't hold out any longer, if you're not going to love me, I'm going to die).

05

TE TOCA TOCAR LA TUMBA

SKORPIO

from the *Tomayo 45 A-2597*, 1974

(Ricardo Del Rosario)

Guaguancó

2:48

Skorpio was the creation of singer/composer Jaime Morrell, a key member of the original Mozambiqueos, one of the best Panamanian Combos next to the Exciters. Silvertones and Festivals. The sound here is very mid-'70s Panamanian barrio salsa, with the well-loved Ricardo "Baballa" Del Rosario, lead singer of Roberto y su Zafra, on vocals.

06

DESCARGA SUPERIOR

LOS SUPERIORES

from the *Discos Istmeños LP Vol. 1 La Nueva Salsa de Los Superiores Taboga-1034*, 1970

(Eduardo Ruiz)

Descarga

2:48

Los Superiores (their nickname was *los nenes psicodelicos* - the psychedelical kids) were a group of high school students that had a sweet Latin soul hit with the song *mi triste confesion* in the early '70s. Led by singer Eduardito Ruiz, the band featured two guitars, two saxes, and a timbalero that doubled on a full drum set. As Miles noted to me, this song highlights the link between the influences of both Latin music and the garage rock sound on the Combos. Santana, Tito Puente and the saxophone tradition of the Panamanian calypso bands all exist side-by-side on this heavy track.

07

NO LLORES PORQUE ME VOY

IDAMERICA RUIZ CON OSVALDO AYALA Y SU CONJUNTO

from the *Osvaba 45 23024B*

(Tradicional Panameña)

Tuna

2:58

Osvado "El Escorpion" Ayala is one of the heavies of música típica to this day, along with icons like Dorindo Cardenas, Teresin Jaen and Yin Carrizo. *No Llores Porque Me Voy* is an opportunity to hear his lead singer, the great Idamerica Ruiz, singing "don't cry because I am leaving." This song is a paseo, a form that originally comes from the Colombian vallenato; signals from Colombian radio stations such as Radio Medellin, Radio Caracol, RCN and la Voz de Cali have been heard clearly in the Panamanian interior since the 1940s. Musical influences have flowed both ways; one of Colombia's famous Los Corraleros de Majagual's biggest hits (which they debuted at the 1963 carnavales in

Barranquilla) was the song Festival en Guará, written by Dorindo Cárdenas.

08

MI BELLA PANAMA

LOS REVOLUCIONARIOS (SOUL REVOLUTION)

from the Solly Ruth 45 SR 116-A, 1969

(D.R.)
3:07

I tried to explain this song recently to someone before they had heard it. "It just has bass, lead and rhythm guitars and latin percussion... and these harmonies..." Just a simple song really that takes you through the sights the author is proud of in Panamá, while noting that Panamá has *hermosas mujeres* (Beautiful women. Many, in fact). This song is an expression of the kind of refreshingly non-belligerent, non-exclusive and positive patriotism that you often hear in Panamá from people who are justly happy with the beautiful landscapes and peoples they live with. Not that that explains what makes this song so nice, I suppose I'll have to be satisfied without an explanation, and just play it again.

09

DREAMS (EDIT)

THE DUNCAN BROTHERS

from the Tamayo LP *The Duncan Bros Are Back Again*
LP 1164, 1974

(D.R.)
4:41

Los Hermanos Duncan were formed by a group of excellent musicians – brothers Alejandro (director/guitar/singer), Alfonso (singer) and Alberto (bass) Duncan from the city of Colón. On drums is Arturo Robinson, Guillermo Herrera on trumpet, and Alberto Wilson on tumbadoras. Famous on the coast, The Duncan Brothers recorded a number of LPs for Tamayo records in the early 1970s, backing Silvertones singers Joe Clark and Carlos Allen, Calypso legend Lord

Cobra, and singer Ruperto Benn (on an LP which has the sought after track *XXX Soul*). Well known for their danceable modern calypsos, "Dreams" features Los Duncan professionally executing a beautiful funk exploration with a relentless buildup.

10

AIN'T NO SUNSHINE

THE SOUL FANTASTICS

from the Discos Istmeños 45 Taboga-462, 1971

(Bill Withers)
Instrumental
3:08

The Soul Fantastics are still one of the most highly regarded of the Combos Nacionales, and had a number of sweet latin soul hits in the early 1970s. Formed by drummer Ricky Staples and singers Daniel Bulgin and Samuel Archer in Panama City's Río Abajo barrio, the band released their first LP *Soul Full Woman* (winner of second place at the first *Festival de Música del Alma* – Soul Music Festival) on Taboga records in 1970. The group disbanded soon after, but re-formed as the New Soul Fantastics, recording this spare and raw cover of the Bill Withers classic on their next LP *Los Nuevos Soul Fantastic*.

11

ESE MUERTO NO LO CARGO YA

THE EXCITERS

from the Loyola LP *The Exciters* ELD15008, 1968

(D.R.)
Típico Soul
3:24

The Exciters' tropical soul version of *Ese Muerto No Lo Cargo Ya*, off their self-titled first LP, is a great vehicle to listen to "the Exciters Horns" (Ramon Davidson and Enrique Stevens) – what a treat. Singing in duo are Rich Burns and musical director/bassist Carlos Brown. Also known as *La Muerte de Don Goyo*, this popular tune is the lament of a man falsely

accused of murdering Don Goyo, who has been found dead in a stream. Don the catchy hook, "*Ese muerto no lo cargo yo, que lo carga el que lo mato*" (I am not taking the fall for that body, let the man that killed him take the fall). By the mid-'70s many of the members of The Exciters had moved to New York City, and Panamá lost a super-group: a lot of brilliant music was created in Panamá during the 1960s and '70s, but The Exciters were pretty much the cream of the crop.

12

LA CONFIANZA

MEÑIQUE EL PANAMEÑO CON BUSH Y LOS MAGNIFICOS

from the Taboga 45 TG 063, 1968

(D.R.)
Guaguancó
3:20

While coming up in Panamá, Miguel Angel Barcasnegras sang with a number of local orchestras including that of famed bandleader Armando Boza. Nicknamed "Meñique" (Pinky) for his diminutive size, Miguel Angel went on to be well known in New York on the verge of the "salsa" era, especially for his work with Tito Puente in the late 1960s and early '70s. Here he teams up with Francisco "Bush" Buckley, the most popular bandleader in Panamá throughout the 1970s, and his Magníficos. This song begins as a lovely guaguancó, then breaks into a nasty montuno, with José Chacho Medina on baritone sax. Being able to play this recording again for Bush – a true connoisseur of Afro-Cuban music – some 40 years after its original recording, was a great personal pleasure.

13

BOROMBON

CAMILO AZUQUITA

from the Loyola 45 CH-456, 1967

(Javier Vasquez)
Shingalín
3:06

Here is a young Camilo Azuquita covering Monguito El

Unico's nice, slow shing-a-ling *Borombon*. Monguito's version is great, if a little stiff, but Azuquita just owns this song. The super-charismatic singer got his start as a boquerista with local orchestras in the early 1960s – by 1968 he was recording with Puerto Rico's finest, Francisco "Kako" Bastar and Rafael Cortijo, on classic albums such as *Kako's Live it Up* and Cortijo's *Ahi Na Ma*. After a rich careershuffling between Puerto Rico, New York and Los Angeles, Azuquita moved to Paris in 1979 and was a big part of the early '80s "salsa" explosion in France (France has been home to a number of great Cuban musicians since the late 1920s).

14

JAZZY

LOS PAPACITOS

from the Loyola 45 CH-447, 1968

(Willie Colón)
Guaracha Descarga
3:10

Los Papacitos were led by Aristides "Tite" Valderrama and his brother Eloy (trumpet) and included Dirk Ortega, who recorded with Bolita y su Tentacion Latina (see Descarga Tentacion on Vol.1) on piano. Los Papacitos never recorded an LP, but are remembered by Combos fans in Panamá as an especially hot group. I played a number of Panamanian selections for a well-known record collector in Cali, and this was the song he most wanted to trade for (he pronounces it "Yassy"). Jazzy is a Willie Colon composition from his underrated first LP on Fania, *El Malo*.

15

LA ESCOBA

ALFREDO Y SU SALSA MONTAÑERA

from the Dispadisa 45, 1971

(Alfredo Escudero)
Norleada Candelita
3:18

Alfredo Escudero y sus Montañeros treat us to a beautiful

uptempo song from carnival time in Las Tablas. The reference to *Sobe la calle abajo, sobala con la escoba* (sweep away calle abajo with the broom) comes from the very serious traditional rivalry between the campesinos that lived in the mountains - called *calle arriba* - and those who lived on the coast, called *calle abajo*. The gorgeous vocal lines of female lead singers in música típica are amply demonstrated here by singer Leonidas Moreno. Also present in profusion are a collection of the inspiring *salomas* of the Panamanian campesino - the celebratory yells that Graham Greene in his novel *Getting to know the General* called "barking". If I am not mistaken, I believe that is a young Eddie Van Halen sitting in on guitar.

16
JUCK JUCK PT.1
SIR JABLONSKY

from the *Star 45*, 1973
(Sir Jablonsky)
4:13

Man, I chased this 45 around all of Panama City after hearing it in Colón. When I first listened to it, I thought: "what... is... this...?" The bass and drums are funky, but then the reggae guitar, and calypso delivery by Sir Jablonsky (not to be confused with the Jamaican singer), who, like most Afro-Antillean-Panamanians, "jucks" them in English and in Spanish. It sounds so modern, with such clean production, but the horns sound like they belong to the era that I love. Consistently beautiful horn arrangements are a hallmark of Panamanian calypso. *Eso sí*.

17
LOVE LETTERS
LORD COBRA Y LOS HNOS. DUNCAN

from the Tamayo LP *Lord Cobra y Los Hnos. Duncan* LPT 1109, 1974
(Lord Cobra)
Calypso
4:46

This was another moment when the jaw dropped just seconds after the needle did. Lord Cobra originally recorded his composition *Love Letters* with his six piece calypso/mento group the Pano-Afros in the late 1960s. This spooky, fender remake, with the very professional backing of the Duncan Brothers, is a little world unto itself. It is also a good opportunity to reflect that part of what made many of the songs from the Brill building and early Motown period in the United States (*Stand by Me, Under the Boardwalk*, etc.) so irresistible was the same tropical beat (known as an "Afro" lament in Cuba) you can hear in *Love Letters*. Ned Sublette (author of the masterful *Cuba and Its Music*) has shown convincingly how Caribbean rhythms formed a key part of early soul and rock and roll. The Cuban son style of trumpeter Guillermo Herrera's line fits in here perfectly - and probably would have on many of Sam Cooke's and the Drifters' songs as well.

18
CEFERINO EN SALSA
CEFERINO NIETO

from the Panavox LP *Ceferino Nieto en Salsa* CO-1003, 1972
(Carlos Zulueta - C. Nieto)
Cumbia Tropical
2:48

Ceferino's nickname, written on his early 45s, was *El Estilista* (the stylist). You might recognize this song if you own *Panama! Vol. 1*: this is Ceferino's remake of Los Exagerados' massive descarga *Panama Esta Bueno y... Ma*, and he pretty much just kills it. The accordion and guitar together play the piano montuno part, then each break off to solo like the sax and trumpet in the original. Ceferino and his sister Esthercita led the Conjunto Bella Luna; they sound like they had a lot of fun on this session, and I love it when they sing *El que no quiere a Ceferino no quiere su mamá* (if you don't love Ceferino, you don't love your own mother).

19
SÍ LA VEZ
ORMELIS CORTEZ CON SU CONJUNTO VIVA GUARARÉ

from the *Orca 45*, 1971
(D.R.)
Zambra
3:41

A típica - samba. Now I have heard it all. We have seen how típica musicians in Panama City in the late 1960s were influenced and inspired by Afro-Cuban forms; here Ormelis Cortez is clearly channeling not just the guaracha, but also the samba with quite a bit of rock feeling. "Sí la vez" (if you see her) says the singer, "Que yo me muero por su querer" (I'm dying for her love)."

20
PICULINA
CHILO PITY

from the *Huracan 45*, 1972
(Carlos Zulueta)
Guaracha
3:15

This sensitive little guaracha is given the típica treatment by Chiló Pity, a well-regarded accordionist from the Chiriquí province near the Costa Rican border. Pity's version features lovely meandering guitar work that turns nasty on that hot bridge in the middle of the song, and a great coro. Song author Carlos "Salsa" Zulueta, the original pianist for Rolando Valdes' Orquesta Sensacion in Cuba in the 1950s, wrote *Piculina* for Dominican trumpeter Rafael Labasta, who recorded it in 1970 (Pity calls out Labasta's name in his version). By the late '60s Zulueta, who by all accounts 1. was a brilliant pianist 2. smoked a lot of reefer 3. and was loco, was living in Panama, giving piano lessons, and thankfully, recording. His work can be heard on the famous LP *Los Exagerados* with Labasta and underrated Jazz saxophone genius Chombo Silva (see the song *Panama Esta Bueno y... Ma* from Vol. 1 of this series).

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