

Xavier Cugat & His Orchestra - Rumba Rumbero (1937-1943) [1992]

Written by bluelover

Friday, 25 November 2011 19:42 - Last Updated Friday, 18 March 2016 17:56

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1. *Blen Blen Blen* 2. *Macurije* 3. *Rumba Rumbero* [play](#) 4. *Nueva Conga* 5. *Tunare* 6. *Cinco Hijos* 7. *Guajira* 8. *Mi Conga* 9. *Elube Chango* 10. *Los Hijos de Buda* 11. *En la plantacion* 12. *Benabe* 13. *Adios Africa* 14. *Bruca Manigua* 15. *Habanera*

[play](#)

16. *Babalu* 17. *Chango ta' beni* 18. *Tabu* 19. *Para Vigo me voy* 20. *Negra Leonor* 21. *Enlloro*
Vocals: - Miguelito Valdés: 1-12 (1940) & 13 (1941) - Alfredito Valdés: 14 & 15 (1937) - Del Campo: 16-21 (1942-43)

With a dance band mixture of tangos, rumbas, conga rhythms, and danzons, Xavier Cugat introduced Latin music to many North Americans in the '30s and '40s. And in spite of early charges of selling out Cuban music, Cugat, to his credit, progressively arrived at a mostly Latin repertoire during his famous stint at New York's Waldorf Astoria. Still, Cugat wasn't a champion of Cuban roots music like mambo and salsa pioneer Arsenio Rodriguez was; his classical training in Cuba and early film work in Hollywood had set him on a course to become a popular bandleader in the states, in spite of his admitted frustration at America's ignorance of Latin music. The fine Tumbao collection *Rumba Rumbero* spotlights Cugat during some of those prime New York years (1937-1943). Including numbers by Chano Pozo, Cugat, and even Rodriguez, the first half of the CD features the incredible Havana-born singer Miguelito Valdes, considered by many to be the best Latin singer of the period (having been the first one to popularize the Cuban classic, he was also donned the original "Mr. Babalu"). His powerful, sultry, and at times crazed vocals (check out the manic "Elube Chango") stand out on the exotica cut "Macurije" (helped along by marimba fills and Cugat's violin commentary), the percussion-riddled "Nueva Conga," and the bolero "En La Plantacion." The remaining selections spotlight the vocal talents of Alfredito Valdes and Del Campo and include a version of "Babalu" among other prime cuts. An excellent Cugat collection that is fit for newcomers and fans alike.
---Stephen Cook, Rovi

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