



Stunt Records STUCD 10182

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Cuban percussionist Eliel Lazo has released an album of Afro-Cuban jazz performed by a unique line-up of Danish and Cuban musicians.

- I would love to be considered an ambassador in Europe for Cuban music and culture.

The 26-year old percussionist and composer Eliel Lazo first visited Denmark in 2004 on an invitation from the Danish Radio Big Band. Other invitations followed. Soon Denmark became a stable base on his travels around the world, and in 2007 he made Copenhagen his home. He married and now has a 3-month old daughter.

- You are welcome to regard my music as a message of love, happiness and peace. I hope to contribute pleasure, to make people smile and dance. And we need it in this Scandinavian season of darkness, which can make you a little depressed.

Eliel Lazo's CD is called EL CONGUERO – plain and simple: 'the conga-player'. It is a CD full of explosive music of Afro-Cuban persuasion, full of the sensuous rhythms that are an essential part of Cuban tradition. The band features a powerful line-up of influential Cuban and Danish instrumentalists including pianist Chucho Valdes and Danish guitarist Mikkel Nordsø. All the songs where written by Eliel Lazo except Rhythm song, by Martha Skytte/Eliel Lazo and Pa Cumbanchar intro by Eliel Lazo/Chucho Valdes, and recorded in Havana, Copenhagen, Madrid and New York. The recordings were mastered by the legendary American Afro-Cuban sound wizard Luis Damian Guell, and the sound of the end result is an attraction in its own right.

- I feel privileged to have found and brought together so many fine musicians. Each has that very special something, which was important

in creating the sound of this album. It was important to have several good improvisers, but it was also necessary to have some Cubans, who have a natural knowledge of the tradition.

The conga-player, EL CONGUERO, distills the essence of Afro-Cuban music, and Eliel Lazo carries on the tradition with immense originality and virtuosity.

He began playing at an early age, egged on by his enthusiastic family. He studied at Oscar Valdes' school of percussion (singer and percussionist, ex-Grupo Irakere musician). In 2003, at the age of 19, Eliel won the prestigious Percuba International Percussion Prize. Soon he was in demand everywhere, and many Cuban as well as international artists have utilized Lazo's talent: Chucho Valdes, Changuito, Tata Guines, Herbie Hancock, Bob Mintzer, Wayne Shorter, Oscar Valdes, Carlos del Puerto, Brian Blade, Dianne Reeves, John Pattitucci, Airto Moreira, Dave Holland and many others. He has played with the popular Cuban bands Diakara and Habana Ensemble, and in Denmark he has worked with the Danish Radio Big Band, Savage Rose, Blanco Y Negro and Mikkel Nordsø Band. Many of the numerous excellent Danish musicians Lazo has played with have paid back the favor by performing on this wonderful, vital and optimistic record.

In 2004 Eliel Lazo recorded his album Art Ensemble of Habana. Since then we have had the pleasure of listening to his playing on the Stunt release Blanco Y Negro - which was recorded in Cuba – on Mikkel Nordsø's 7 Steps to Heaven and the Danish Radio Big Band's Cuban Flavor. His playing is also featured on Cuban Andante Cesar Lopez Y Habana Ensemble and on numerous other recordings. He performs in the American movie about Cuban music, Music Under the Radar. He has taught at conservatories in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden.

Habana / Un gallego en la Habana / Martha / Rythm song / Complicated girl / A mis padres / Eliel solo / Pa cumbanchar intro / Pa cumbanchar / Africa / Parapirope.

Eliel Lazo (congas, timbales, guiro, bata, chekere, clave claps, vocal), Alexander Abreu, Julio Padron, Mads La Cour (trumpet), Carlos Perez (trombone), Jens Søndergaard, Livan Morejon, Samuel Hejslet, Jacob Dinesen (sax), Mikkel Nordsø, Flavio Rodriques (guitar), Ben Besiakov, Dan Hemmer (organ), Yasser Pino, Yandi Martinez, Hugo Rasmussen, Carlos Del Puerto (bass), Chucho Valdes, Alean Imbert, Michael Heise (piano), Tony Moreaux (drums), Ignacio Guerra (bata), Marvin Diz, Jacob Andersen (timbales), Raul Rekow (congas), Ayi Solomon (Djembe) & Hanne Boel (vocal).

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