



Raul Paz

An ebony-black great-uncle: Changuito, who is the grand master of Cuban percussions, and still lives in Havana. A Galician golden-haired grandmother: Juanita, who is known to all Miami-based Cuban dance aficionados. Raúl Paz' dark eyes and Little Prince-like blond curly hair bear testimony to this mixed heritage - as does his music. Born in Pinar Del Rio - renowned for the quality of both its tobacco and its musicians (Maria Teresa Vera, Rubalcaba, Anga Diaz & Polo Montanez) Raúl (now 30) spent 15 years of his life in various music schools and academies, where he learned the violin as well as singing, harmony and conducting.

He also made a name for himself as an actor in Havana, and played a few lead roles in films (among others, " Hello Hemingway " – Fernando Perez). Though America beckoned, Raúl decided to move to France in 1997, a country which he felt would prove a more appropriate place for cultural intermingling. No doubt the French way of life was another deciding factor...

Soon, at clubs like the New Morning, Hot Brass, Bataclan, Elysée Montmartre, he was sharing the spot with every Afro-Cuban musician stopping over in Paris: Oscar De Leon, Los VanVan, Ruben Blades, Albita...A member of the Latino and African musical community based in France, he became one of the leaders of the 'Cuban wave' in this country.

During the legendary '99 Fania All Stars concert at the Zenith, Cheo Feliciano (THE voice of bolero) invited Raul to join him on stage. When Ralph Mercado - the owner of RMM, the man who invented the very word " Salsa " - heard the voice of Raul Paz among the well-established salsa stars, he immediately decided to promote the " French Cubano ". That same year, Raul PAZ recorded his first album for RMM: " Cuba Libre " at Gloria Estefan's Miami studios. Far from sticking to salsa standards, he pushed back the limits of the genre and explored new trends with his inimitable energy. The album was a hit in the US (selling more than 100 000 units) and Raúl Paz was awarded the Best New Male Singer Award by the New York music press.

A follow-up tour through the American continent gave Raúl the opportunity to meet his public and reveal himself as a true live performer. Along the way, he also got to sing with the likes of Celia Cruz, Tito Puente, La India or Ricky Martin.

But in 2001, Ralph Mercado Music shut down and Raul's New York experience stopped temporarily. Back to France where he still owns a house and has many friends. Back on the road with his fellow musicians, playing major festivals: Womad, Arezzo, Roskilde. Open to new sounds and techniques, interested in the fusion of genres, he moves towards electro-music.

"Contigo ", written and recorded with DJ Arian & Pipi, becomes a cult 12' in clubs all around the Mediterranean. In the wake of this success, Raul meets producer Mousse T and decides to mix his new album, previously recorded in Cuba, with his team Danya Vodovoz & Ferry Ultra, at the Hanover Pepermint studios. Danya (from Russia) and Ferry (from Iran) are two rising stars of the electro scene (Strictly Rhythm). They've become known to a larger public through their remix of Tom Jones' " Sex Bomb ".

The collaboration proves significant for Raúl. The DJs' efficient groove adds a lot to the richness and quality of his melodies. And the voice mix allows the listener to enjoy all the charm and humour of Raúl PAZ' lyrics. Continued traditions. Continuous innovation : pop arabesques (Mulata), ballads freely " inspired " from Trova (LLegare), hip-hop beats (Mi Barrio), dub (Pelicula), a few tips of the hat to childhood and Caribbean music (Mua Mua Mua, Loco Loco..).

Mulata thrives on the subtle mix of Cuban instruments and samples from Hanover. What we have here is the mature album of an artist who is not denying either his culture or his origins, yet claims the right to go and sing as he pleases...

After superb concerts in Germany in summer of 2004, he continues his tour in France and impressing the audience with his extraordinary presence and entertainer qualities on stage.

In Spring 2005 Raúl published his third long player 'Revolucion' with 12 new fantastic songs, mixed in Paris and mastered in New York at Sterling Sterling Sound Studios.

Raul's music is always relaxed and in a pleasant way outside the mainstream salsa. His last studio album, '¡En Casa!', contains mostly quiet and mainly acoustic songs. It was recorded in Cuba in March 2007, in the same studios where already the legendary Buena Vista Social Club produced. It was a small sensation as he was the first exile Cuban artist who was allowed to re-enter Cuba, due to an official invitation by the Cuban minister of culture.

In May 2007, he presented, 'En Casa' finally live in Cuba. His return was a big event, which was released September 2008 as Special Live CD / DVD "¡En Vivo!" all over Europe. '¡En Vivo!' is the wonderful result and testimony of this return, a compilation of his most beautiful songs, recorded live to two exceptional places in Havana and Pinar del Rio, Rauls hometown in Cuba.