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ARTIST BIO: BARBARITO TORRES

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Bárbaro Alberto Torres Delgado, “Barbarito Torres”, is known in the international artistic world as the “Laúd King” or “The virtuous of the strings”.

Born in Matanzas city, Cuba, in april 1956, Barbarito has developed all the genders of the Cuban popular music on the “laúd” (a 12 stringed Cuban lute) and in the traditional folk rural music in particular. He has been an outstanding connoisseur of this music since the age of 7, period in which, influenced by his family, he made his first steps in music.

At the age of 14 he became a professional, taking part in different traditional groups of country music, such as: Serenata Yumurina, Cuarteto Tradicional Matancero (he was the director of this group), Conjunto Yaraví and Conjunto Campo Alegre.

In 1988 he took part in Manguaré group, bearer of the cuban popular music, including the lute in a music style where this instrument is not standard, yet achieving great success among the specialized critic and public acceptance, and where Barbarito really stands out as the virtuoso of the laúd in Cuba.

Among the most important features of his style are his technical level, speed, sound clearness and the high improvisation level, specially from a harmonic point of view.

His use of contemporary harmonies, not often applied by the lutes playing, created a revolution in such a traditional instrument as the laud.

Barbarito Torres has created a new tone in Cuban folk music where this instrument comes from. The artist himself explain: “The laúd is the leading instrument in country music, but it was grid and I took it away from that place” Undoubtedly, Barbarito has made his legacy by founding a style that is admired and followed by the new generations.

In 1991 he creates the group “Piquete Cubano”, a project founded by himself and the cuban musicologist Sonia Pérez Cassola, with the aim of making a serious concert work with the cuban music and specially with the country music. It was in this group that he joined Celina González, known as the “Queen of Cuban Country Music” for four years.

In 1997 Barbarito was called to participate in the internationally most famous project of Cuba, the “Buena Vista Social Club”.

Barbarito highlighted because of his talent, charisma and staging at the Carnegie Hall concert in New York and at the Carre Theater in Amsterdam.

This international spread through both Album and Film has consolidated him as a unique innovative artist, and at the same time, loyal to his roots.

“Barbarito Torres y Piquete Cubano” with only ten musicians on stage, performs a vigorous, powerful show.

This project gathers several high quality musicians, combining a precise vocal work and at the same time, the taste of innovation and the contemporary.

Nowadays he is official profesor of the “Popular Musicians” Chair at the ISA and member of the “Writers and Artists Union” in Cuba.

Barbarito Torres has made countless concert tours all along his professional life, both nationals and internationals, radio programmes, television, he has collaborated with other artists, and also took part in soundtracks for cuban films and documentaries.

He has been invited by Masters Leo Brower and Jesús Ortega to participate in the “Festival Internacional de la Guitarra de La Habana” since 1986, in the “Festival de Son de la Canción Caribeña”, in the “Festival de Varadero”, in the “Festival de Música Salsa de Cali”, in the “Festival Intersalsa en México”, in the Montreal Jazz Festival and in the Vancouver Jazz Festival in Canada, in the Aspen Jazz Festival, and in the San Francisco Jazz Festival in EEUU, in the Latinoamericano Festival and Foggia Jazz Festival in Italy, among others.

He has shared stage with great musicians such as Leo Brower, Ibrahim Ferrer, Guajiro Mirabal, Cachaito López, Omara Portuondo, Oscar de León, Papo Luca, Celina González, flamenco guitarist José Antonio Rodríguez, Ibrahim Ferrer, Omar Hernández, Jorge Reyes, Andy Montañés, Cesaria Evora, José Alberto el Canario, Willie Colón, Neil Young, among others.

He has toured around EEUU, Canada, France, Italy, England, Colombia, Spain, Mexico, Libia, Switzerland, Japan, Panama, Argentina, Chile, Venezuela, Martinica, etc. ...

His two production are acclaimed by the critic: "Havana Café", first place of sales in Amazon.com in 1999 and "BARBARITO TORRES", released in 2003 and Grammy Nominate in 2004, Best Tropical Traditional Album.

The "New York Times" has described Barbarito Torres as the "Cuban Chuck Berry" and write: It's Country Music, but it Rocks...A Virtuoso...Completely Exuberant...

LA TIMES write: "More than a mere re-creation on the original son movement, the record (BARBARITO TORRES) presents music that is a vital as it is inspiring, marked by soaring vocal harmonies and Torres' virtuoso on the lute"

Discography:

Buena Vista Social Club (1997)-WCD050 World Circuit -Grammy 1998

With Ry Cooder, Ibrahim Ferrer, Puntillita, Rubén Gonzalez, Barbarito Torres, Omara Portuondo, Eliades Ochoa, Compay Segundo, etc...

Havana Café (1999)-83183-2 Atlantic,

With Ibrahim Ferrer, Frank Emilio, Omara Portuondo, Richard Egües, Luis "El Guajiro" Mirabal, etc.

Barbarito Torres (2003)-245360580-2 Havana Caliente-Pimienta Record-Grammy Nominate 2004

With Chucho Valdés, Pío Leiva, Omara Portuondo, Guajiro Mirabal, Pedro Calvo, etc.

Producer:

Jesús Bello. "Sin brujería ni ná". (1986) EGREM.

Clave Cubana. " Dicen que el son..." with Sonia Pérez Cassola. (2001) BIS MUSIC.

Soy la Décima Guajira with Sonia Pérez Cassola (2008) EGREEM.

Collaborations:

Afro Cuban All Stars "A toda Cuba le gusta " (1997)-WCD047 World Circuit-Grammy Nominate 1998.

Buena Vista Social Club presents... Ibrahim Ferrer (1997)-WCD055 World Circuit- Grammy Nominate 2000

Amadito Valdés. Bajando Gervasio (2002)-CRADX-2002-Disco Caramba.- Grammy Nominate 2004.

Compay Segundo "Lo mejor de la Vida" (1998) Dro East West

Omara Portuondo "Flor de Amor"(2003) Worl Circuit. Latin Grammy nominate.2005

"Maraca" Orlando Valle "Sonando" (1998) AHI-Nama

Afro Cuban All Stars "Distinto diferente" (1999)-WCD 058 World Circuit

Cesaria Evora "Café Atlántico" (1999) Lusafrica /BMG Classics

Frank Emilio "Reflejos Ancestrales" (1999) Blue Note

Kyoko Fukada Sony Music, produced by Ryu Murakami.

Javier Zalba. "Baritoncha" (2006). Producciones Colibrí.

BVSC's Ibrahim Ferrer & Omara Portuondo featuring Coldplay, U2, Arctic Monkeys, Kaiser Chiefs, Sting, Jack Johnson, Franz Ferdinand, Maroon 5, Dido & Faithless (2006). Universal Music. (reg Charity 1113451)

Natural Disaster Relief and Climate Change Awareness programmes.

Rhythms del Mundo. Cubano-Alemán (2008). Universal