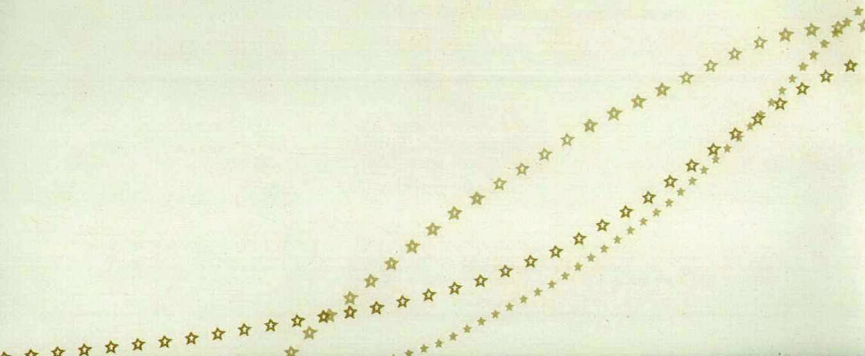
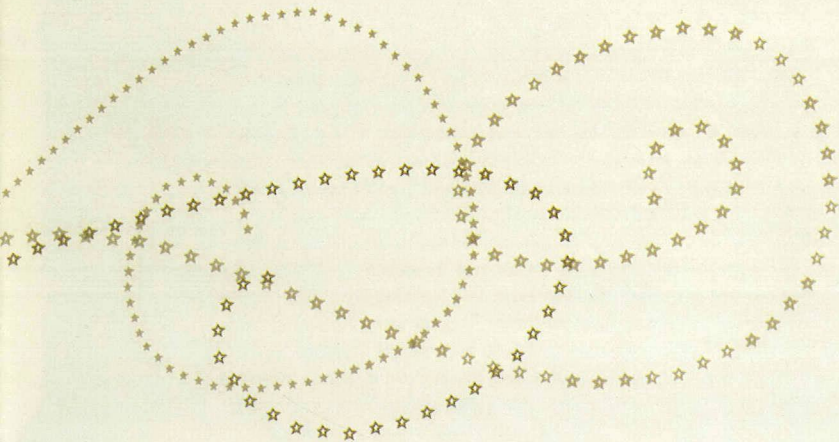


**MANUEL**

**GUER**

**MIRABAL**






## MANUEL 'EL GUAJIRO' MIRABAL

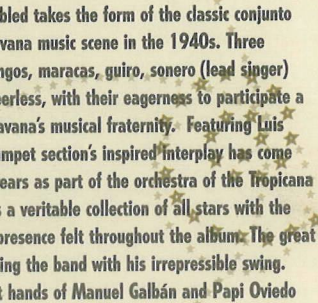
The characteristic trumpet playing of Manuel 'El Guajiro' Mirabal has been a staple of the Havana music scene for over four decades. The quintessentially Cuban trumpet player was born in 1933 in Melena del Sur, on the outskirts of Havana, hence his ironic but affectionate nickname 'guajiro' (meaning country boy). His father was director of the local municipal band, so young Guajiro was immersed in music from an early age. He satisfied his curiosity by trying out a few instruments in the band, including the clarinet and saxophone, before settling on the trumpet at eleven years of age. To his father's delight he took to it prodigiously quickly, turning professional a mere seven years later with the local band Conjunto Universal. By 1953 he was honing his talents with the jazz band "Swing Casino", one of the many North American style bands that flourished on the island when it was still a playground for rich Americans, followed by the "Orquesta Casino Parisien" at the Hotel Nacional. Restless and seeking a change, he founded the "Conjunto Rumbavana" in 1956, an outfit playing Cuban son, guaracha and mambo at casinos, nightclubs and carnivals all over Cuba and ultimately beyond. Success came quickly, and with the future Afro-Cuban All Star vocalists Raul Planas and Lino Borges, Rumbavana started to make waves. Guajiro left just before the group embarked on a second international phase to take up a residency with the "Riverside Orchestra" at





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the renowned Tropicana Club in 1960. For the next thirty years the Tropicana became his second home as he joined the house band of the Club's cabaret. Keen to satisfy his creative urges Guajiro was also a founder and long-term member of the groundbreaking Orquesta Cubana de Musica Moderna. Guajiro would finally achieve international recognition through his live and studio work with the Buena Vista Social Club, the Afro Cuban All Stars, and subsequent projects by Rubén González, Ibrahim Ferrer, and Omara Portuondo. Although he has featured on a large number of recordings over the years this is his debut album under his own name. For this debut he has chosen to pay tribute to the spirit of the legendary giant of Cuban music, El Ciego Maravilloso (The Blind Marvel), Arsenio Rodríguez.

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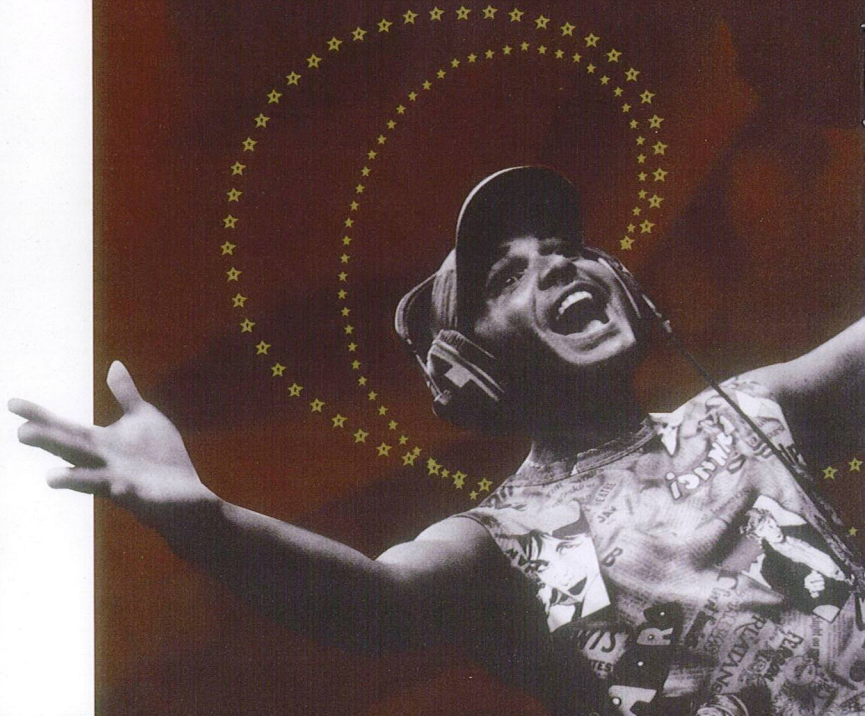
The group that Guajiro has assembled takes the form of the classic conjunto with which Arsenio exploded onto the Havana music scene in the 1940s. Three trumpets, piano, tres, guitar, congas, bongos, maracas, guiro, sonero (lead singer) and coro (backing vocals). The band is peerless, with their eagerness to participate a testament to Guajiro's status amongst Havana's musical fraternity. Featuring Luis Alemañy and Alejandro Pichardo, the trumpet section's inspired interplay has come from playing together for almost thirty years as part of the orchestra of the Tropicana cabaret. The driving percussion section is a veritable collection of all stars with the brilliant Miguel 'Angá' Díaz making his presence felt throughout the album. The great Orlando 'Cachaíto' López is on bass, rooting the band with his irrepressible swing. Rhythm guitar and tres are in the expert hands of Manuel Galbán and Papi Oviedo

respectively. At the piano is Roberto Fonseca, the rising young star of Cuban music.

The album opens with **EL RINCÓN CALIENTE** a trademark Arsenio son montuno. Regally burnished trumpets set up the 'push-pull' rhythm, which introduces the sonero, Calunga. A young star of Havana's timba dance music scene, Calunga was not familiar with Arsenio's music prior to this recording, but he has the perfect voice for it and relishes the double entendre exhortation to go to the hot corner. **PARA BAILAR EL MONTUNO** is a homage to Arsenio's tres playing from Papi Oviedo. The track is set up as a sort of Fiesta de la Rumba with Calunga declaring 'There is the wall that separates your life from mine. That damned wall I will break it down some day.' Luis Marqueti's beautiful bolero **DEUDA** was given a brilliant treatment by Arsenio's band in 1946 but this version may even surpass it. The great Ibrahim Ferrer sings in duet on this track with Pepe Maza. The lyrics 'I know you will suffer, because you made my heart suffer' explain that you will ultimately pay the price for taking advantage of someone's love. José 'Maracaibo' Castaneda takes the tres solo before the coro introduce their theme 'Todo en la vida se paga' (everything in life has a price). This sets up a duel between Guajiro on trumpet and the extraordinary Jesús 'Aguaje' Ramos on trombone. As with the majority of the tracks on this album, **Deuda** was recorded 'live' in the studio in one take. **EL RELOJ DE PASTORA** is one of Arsenio's best-known songs. The sonero is Diego Ramon Palacio who did a great job stepping forward from the coro during recording when he noticed that the track's allocated singer had left the room. The excellent flute, an unusual instrument in Arsenio's music, is by Ritmo Oriental's Polo Tamayo. **ME BOTÉ DE GUAÑO** is the

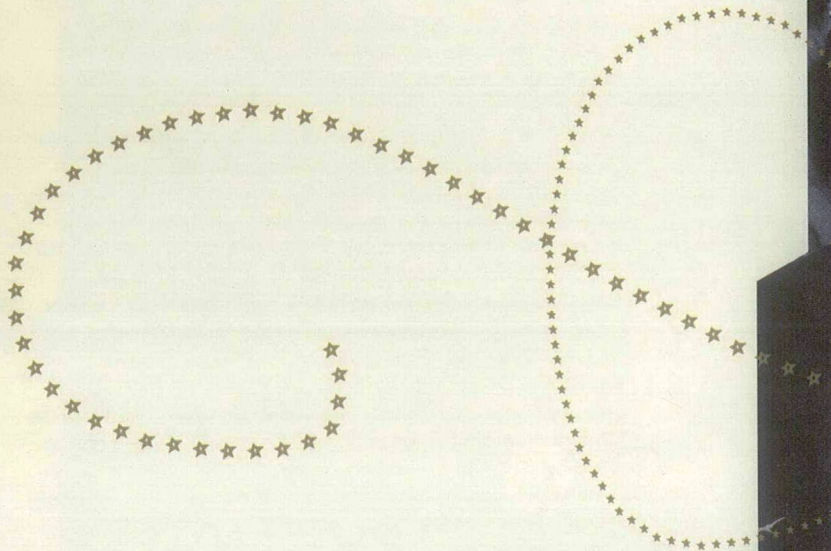


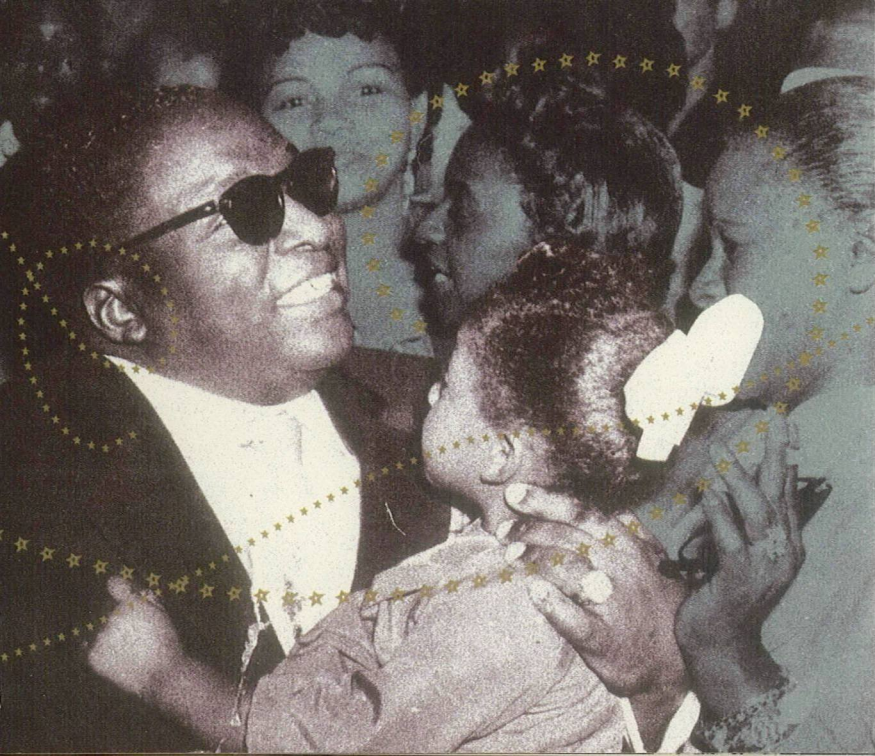




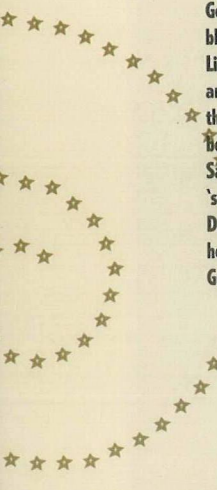
perfect vehicle for Guajiro's declamatory style, which echoes Arsenio's brilliant soloists Félix Chappotín and Chocolate Armenteros. Calunga swaggers through the song taking the role of 'guapo', 'I like to look the part. I tip my hat right back. They say come and have a drink, and of course that's just fine. Those who understand, understand. Whoever doesn't I'll kill them.' Trademark trumpet mambos punch throughout the track, as do Anga's congas.

The majority of songs on this album come from Arsenio's golden period in the 1940s before he left Cuba for New York, whereas the exuberant love song **MI CORAZÓN NO TIENE QUIEN LO LORE** is from his 1960s American band, which briefly included a sax section and an expanded trumpet section, and arranger Demetrio Muñiz pays homage to that sound. The heat is changed a little for **TENGO QUE OLVIDARTE** a beautiful bolero with typical Arsenio Rodríguez / Lili Martínez trumpet arrangement. Pepe Maza and Demetrio Muñiz on second voice sing of the pain of love gone bad, 'Now I detest your cold caresses that before bewitched my soul. Forget me, hate me. Even if you beg me to come back I have to forget you'. Fonseca's piano solo is in typical Lili Martínez bolero style. **CANTA MONTERO** is a guajira son given a country style interpretation by the distinctive voice of Aldo Del Rio with Guajiro's improvised trumpet quoting the Cuban national anthem in echo of the song's tribute to the Cuban heroes Martí and Maceo. **CHICHARRONERO** was written by Lili Martínez, Arsenio's brilliant arranger and pianist, who got his job with Arsenio in 1944 following a recommendation from his friend and predecessor, Rubén









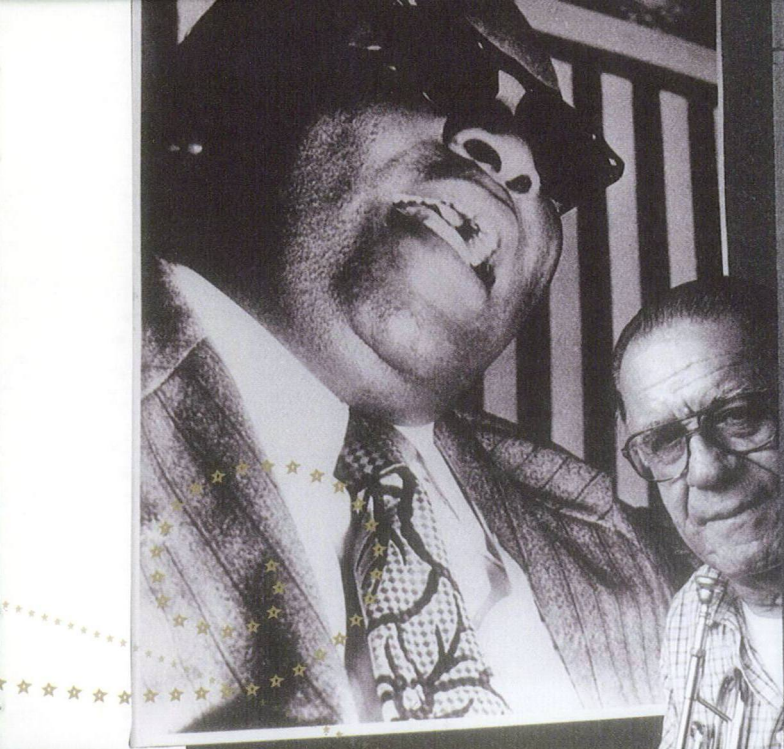
González. Calunga takes the role of street vendor selling fried pork fat, while Guajiro blasts out some swaggering improvisations. On piano Roberto Fonseca pays tribute to Lili. As with Calunga, this recording was Fonseca's initiation to the music of Arsenio, and he became an instant admirer. The next track is Arsenio's bizarre medley of three of his compositions **NO VUELVO A MORÓN**, which tells of the bad road between Ciego and Morón, **LAS TRES MARIAS**, 'I have three Marias, one lives in Santiago, one in Havana, and the other in Ethiopia', and **APURRÚNENME MUJERES**, 'squeeze me tight girls'. Calunga is joined on vocals by his contemporary Tirso Duarte. The closer **DOMBE DOMBE** features Rubén González performing a piece that he remembered playing with Arsenio in the early 1940s. Rubén's favourite trumpeter Guajiro signs off in a playful mood.

THE MAKING OF THIS ALBUM WAS A REAL LABOUR OF LOVE AND, FOR GUAJIRO, IT'S A GREAT THRILL TO FINALLY BE DOING HIS SOLO ALBUM AT 71, AS HE SAYS "EVERYTHING COMES IN TIME." THE QUIET MAN OF CUBAN MUSIC HAS SPOKEN.... MAKE SURE YOU TURN IT UP LOUD!

# ARSENIO RODRÍGUEZ

Arsenio Rodríguez (1911-1970) was a genius, and one of the great figures in the development of Cuban music. As a young child he was kicked in the head by a mule, which led to blindness, hence his nickname 'El Ciego Maravilloso' (The Blind Marvel). Arsenio began his musical career early, quickly gaining a reputation for himself as a tres player and composer. Together with the López brothers, Anselmo Sacasa and Perez Prado, he is credited with originating the mambo rhythm that revolutionised Cuban music in the early 1940s. Descended from Congolese slaves, he claimed this rhythm to be of Congolese origin, and referred to it as 'El Diablo'. He brought African influences to the fore in the groundbreaking group, with which he stormed Havana society in the 1940s. For this group he took the radical step of adding conga drum, piano, and a trumpet section to the established Cuban septeto format of voice, trumpet, bass, tres, guitar, bongos, and maracas.

This innovation completely transformed the whole sound and definition of Cuban music; and created the mould for the modern salsa conjunto. The group, including pianist and arranger Lili Martínez, trumpeter Felix Chappotin, was arguably the strongest ever to play Cuban music and at a time of extensive racism, was a huge hit amongst the black public. In 1947 Arsenio travelled to New York to seek a cure for his blindness, which was unsuccessful. He moved to America in 1950 never to return to Cuba. He continued to perform and record, and although he remained a cult figure and almost deity to musicians, he met with limited commercial success, and died in poverty in Los Angeles in 1970.



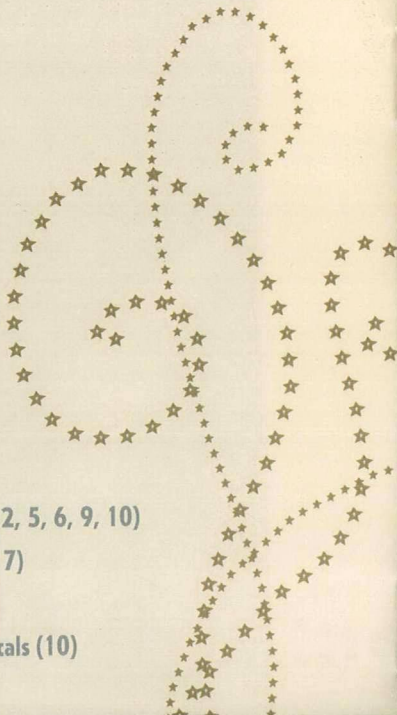
## MUSICIANS

Manuel 'Guajiro' Mirabal  
Luis Alemány Conde  
Alejandro Pichardo  
Roberto Fonseca  
Papi Oviedo  
Manuel Galbán  
Orlando 'Cachaíto' López  
Miguel 'Angá' Díaz  
Carlos González  
Amadito Valdés  
Enrique Lazaga  
Alberto 'Virgilio' Valdés

Carlos M. Calunga  
Ibrahim Ferrer  
Pepe Maza  
Demetrio Muñiz  
Diego Ramon Palacio  
Aldo Del Rio  
Tirso Oriol Duarte Lescay

trumpet  
trumpet  
trumpet  
piano  
tres  
guitar  
bass  
congas  
bongos  
timbales  
guiro  
maracas

lead vocals (1, 2, 5, 6, 9, 10)  
lead vocals (3)  
duet vocals (3, 7)  
duet vocals (7)  
lead vocals (4)  
lead vocals (8)  
lead & duet vocals (10)



alto & baritone saxophones (6, 8)  
tenor saxophone (8)  
tenor saxophone (6, 8)  
alto saxophone (8)  
baritone saxophone (6)  
alto saxophone (6)  
tenor saxophone (6)

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**Carlos Manuel Calunga**  
**Diego Coppinger**  
**Tirso Oriol Duarte Lescay**  
**Juan de Marcos González**  
**Pepe Maza**  
**Manuel Denis Martínez**  
**Lázaro Miguel**  
**Diego Ramon Palacio**  
**Jesús 'Aguaje' Ramos**  
**Lázaro Villa**  
**Victor Villa**



## **A WORLD CIRCUIT PRODUCTION**

**Produced by  
NICK GOLD**

**Recorded and mixed by  
JERRY BOYS**

**Musical Director  
DEMETRIO MUÑIZ**

**Recorded at  
EGREM STUDIOS, HAVANA**

**Mixed at  
LIVINGSTON STUDIOS, LONDON**

**Assistant recording engineers  
SIMON BURWELL, TOM LEADER AND  
ISEL MARTÍNEZ**

**Assistant mix engineers  
SIMON BURWELL  
AND FRANÇOIS MONNIER**

**Mastered by  
TOM LEADER AND JERRY BOYS**

**Administration in Havana  
ZITA M. MORRIÑA 'TOTI', CLAIR  
MCFADDEN & CHANTAL BOUGNAS**

**Production Supervision  
SARA DAOUD**

**Sleeve notes by  
NICK GOLD & DAVE MCGUIRE**

**Photography by  
CHRISTINA JASPERS**

**Design by  
[IWANTDESIGN.CO.UK](http://IWANTDESIGN.CO.UK)**

**Front cover inspired by  
THE ANTILLA ALBUMS  
'SABROSO Y CALIENTE' BY ARSENIO RODRIGUEZ  
& 'SABOR TROPICAL' BY CHAPPOTTIN**

## **AGRADECIMIENTOS**

A mi padre por haberme iniciado en los caminos de la música, a mi esposa Mérida Valdés por haber sido mi compañera y guía en los últimos 45 años, a Nick Gold presidente de la disquera por haber confiado en mí, a Jerry el grabador, a Demetrio Muñiz por los excelentes arreglos, a todo el personal del estudio, a todos los músicos y cantantes que intervienen en el mismo y que no me atrevo a nombrar por temor a omitir alguno

A todos muchas gracias

## **THANKS**

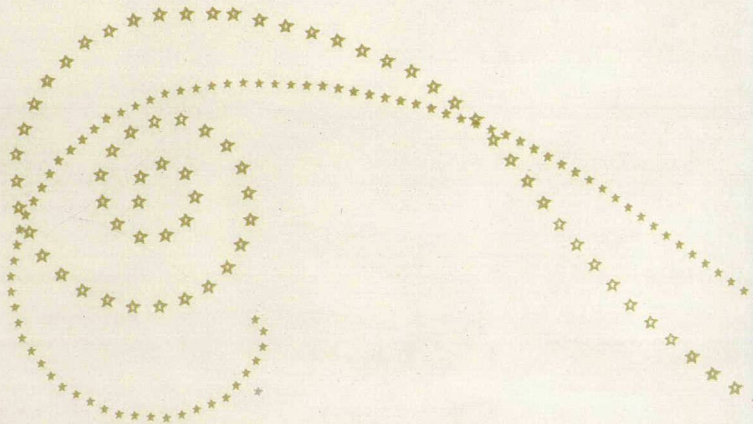
To my father for introducing me to music, to my wife Mérida Valdés for being my partner and guide for the past 45 years, to Nick Gold of World Circuit for trusting me, to Jerry for recording the album, Demetrio Muñiz for his excellent arrangement, and to everyone at the studio, including all the musicians and singers who took part, and who I am afraid to name in case I miss anyone out.

Many thanks to all of you.

## **EL GUAJIRO.**

**Dedicated to: Alejandro Segundo PICHARDO PEREZ, (1941 – 2003)**





**BUENA VISTA**

**SaCC**

**CLUB**

**WCD069**