



MARIO BAUZA (1911-1993)

[WATCH A VIDEO.](#)

Clarinet, saxophone, trumpet, arranger, composer, recording artist, music director, bandleader

Born in the Cayo Hueso section of La Habana, Cuba, Mario Bauza had a special musical talent, and began formal lessons as a child. He studied music at the Municipal Academy of Cuba, and by the age of nine was clarinetist at the Havana Philharmonic Orchestra, where he remained for three years. He underwent intensive tutoring under Maestro Antonio Maria Romeu, joining his band Charanga Francesa and in 1925 traveled to New York with them to record. He had just turned fourteen years old! Upon his return to Cuba, he trained and practiced trumpet under Lázaro Herrera, a stellar trumpet master for the Septeto Nacional, the finest band on the island.

He had tried to get something going with his brother in law Frank Grillo better known as Machito, but they couldn't make it happen. Machito, an accomplished singer in his own right, started his own band the Afro-Cubans, and in Dec. of 1940 debuted at the Park Plaza Ballroom. Mario, resigned his chair with Cab Calloway, and in 1941 became the music director of Machito and his Afro-Cubans, where he remained for thirty five years. They were a new kind of band. Latin music is defined by the clave. The clave creates the essential tension and release that propels the music in a forward motion that is conducive to dancing. The clave is a five beat pattern that is played over two measures, setting the pace and determining the rhythm, it is the secret to this music. Machito and Mario of course had innate knowledge of this, and merely adapted it to the jazz arrangements they were playing. Thus began the fusion now called Latin Jazz.

Machito and his Afro-Cubans, under the musical direction of Mario Bauza would go on through the '50's, and '60's, to record over thirty albums under a variety of labels as Decca, Mercury, CBS, Seeco, Tico/Roulette, and GNP. They would perform steady through this period, though by the end of the '60's the gigs were drying up. The times and music were changing. People wanted something new, and the younger people found it in salsa, the latest craze.

For more information, go to his biography on <http://www.allaboutjazz.com/>

See you tomorrow to discover another "Born in April" jazz artist!