

CENTRO DIGITAL DE MÚSICA LATINA

BEYOND SALSA PIANO

THE CUBAN TIMBA PIANO REVOLUTION



VOLUME 3 • INTERMEDIATE

CUBAN PIANO TUMBAOS: 1960-1979

by Kevin Moore

photography by Tom Ehrlich

cover photo subject: Iván "Melón" Lewis

audio and video companion products available at www.timba.com/audio

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The Birth of Los Van Van



Los Van Van: Areíto EPA-6163 (vinyl EP)

This is a photo of an extremely rare Cuban vinyl EP. In general I use these italicized sections to suggest the cheapest and most available CDs to acquire the source tracks for the tumbaos. For the 1970s and 80s, I've also prepared extensive discographies in the Timbapedia section of www.timba.com which document the original vinyl releases and go into great detail on the various reissues. These discographies are freely available online.

In 1969, Formell left Revé to form his own band, Los Van Van, taking with him many of Revé's musicians, including pianist Pupy Pedrosó. His first new songs bore much in common with the music he created for Revé although he began calling it *songo* instead of changüí 68. The standout track from 1969 was *La lucha*, which the group still sometimes includes in its "popurri" live medleys.

Tumbao 7, in the style of *La lucha*'s introduction, is an even more striking example than Tumbao 6 of Formell's new wide-open approach to harmony.

Tumbao 7 – tracks 13 & 14



In the style of: Los Van Van: *La lucha* – 1969 – tempo=108 bpm – 2-3 clave – piano: Pupy Pedrosó

Tumbao 43 – tracks 85 & 86

Chord progression for Tumbao 43:

- System 1: Fm7, Bb7, Gm7, C7
- System 2: Fm7, Bb7, EbM7, AbM7, Gm7b5, C7
- System 3: Fm7, Bb7, Gm7, C7
- System 4: F#m7, B7, Abm7, Db7

In the style of: AfroCuba: *Si pregunta por mí dile que vuelvo* – 1980 – tempo=134 bpm – 2-3 clave –
pno: Ernán López-Nussa

A common attitude among Latin jazz musicians is to boast that their format is more creative because the chord progressions are longer and sometimes more complex, and because the improvised solos result in their performances being much more varied from night to night. The rebuttal of dance band musicians and arrangers is that their tumbaos are much more varied and creative, their arrangements are much more intricate than just theme and variations, and, through the use of the gear changes we'll study in Volume 5, they have the potential to improvise the actual *form* of an arrangement from night to night rather than simply to improvise the notes within a static form.

As usual, the truth lies somewhere in-between. Most dance bands don't live up to the astounding spontaneous gear change performances of the late-90s incarnations of The Issac Delgado Group, Paulito FG y su Élite and Bamboleo, and all could greatly increase their night-to-night variety by

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About the Author

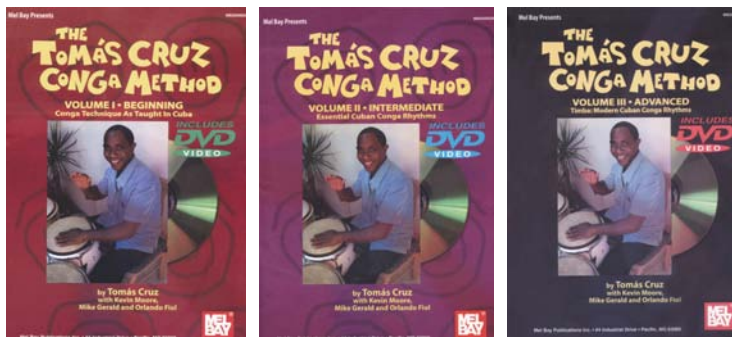


Melón Lewis, Kevin Moore – Los Angeles, 2009

Kevin Moore (kevin@timba.com) is the co-founder and music editor for the world's largest Cuban music website, www.timba.com, to which he has contributed the free online multimedia book *The Roots of Timba*, dozens of book-length articles, discographies, record analyses, interviews and the daily Cuban music blog *La última*, which is nearing its 10th year of publication.

In the early 2000s Kevin co-wrote *The Tomás Cruz Conga Method, Volumes 1-3*, a critically acclaimed method book used as a text at various educational institutions.

The Tomás Cruz Conga Method – Volumes 1, 2, & 3



Published by Mel Bay Available for Purchase at www.amazon.com

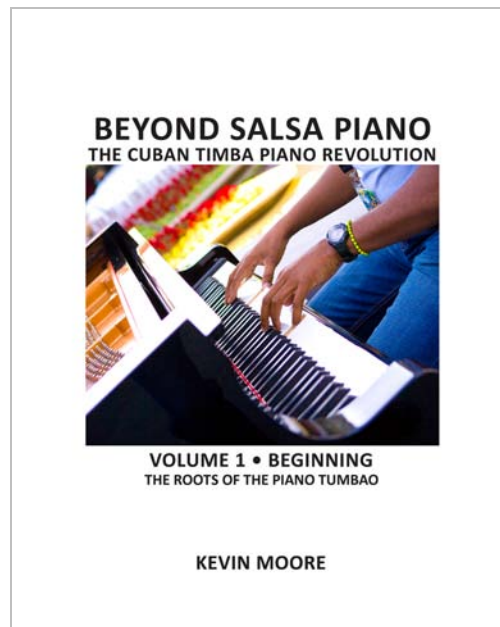
As musical director, composer, arranger and violinist of the California-based salsa band Orquesta Gitano he co-produced the 1998 CD *Salsa Gitana*.



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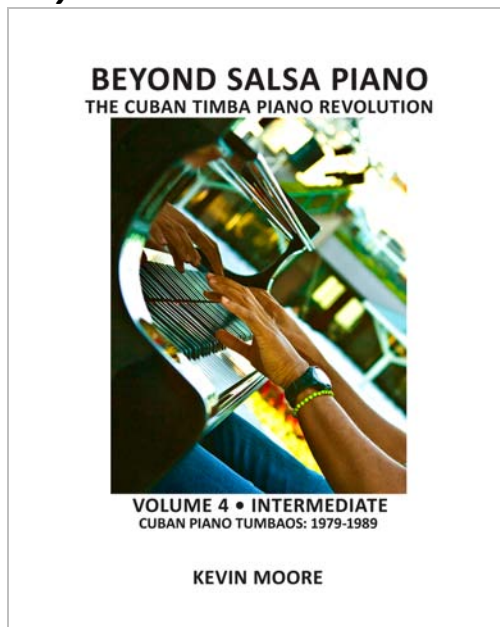


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VOLUME 6 • IVÁN "MELÓN" LEWIS, PT. 1
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