

*No pianist has played on more records that all of postrevolutionary Cuba sang along with than Pupy. And at the same time, he's a direct link to that golden age of Arsenio and Chappotín.*

**Ned Sublette**

author of *Cuba and Its Music: From the First Drums to the Mambo*

*El modo de interpretar de Pupy Pedroso constituye el crossover entre la músicaailable contemporanea cubana y los esquemas tradicionales heredados de los grandes pianistas soneros de los cincuentas, en particular, de su padre, Nené, quien fuera una de las luminarias de la época. Su estilo inovador, su talento para componer y orquestar y su sagacidad para lograr la preferencia pública en un país tan competitivo como Cuba, lo sitúan en uno de los lugares mas destacados del ambiente musical de los últimos cuarenta años. Definitivamente Pupy, junto a José Luis "Changuito" Quintana y Juan Formell, forma parte del nucleo generador del sonido Van Van, que por tanto tiempo ha satisfecho las exigencias de los "casineros" mas puristas.*

**Juan de Marcos**

composer, tresero, leader of The Afro-Cuban All-Stars

*Pupy, es poseedor de un estilo peculiar a la hora de tocar el piano, tumbaos de gran fuerza cargados de un estilo sonero indiscutible hacen de Pupy uno de los pianistas de Son mas importantes de los últimos años."*

**Adalberto Álvarez**

pianist, composer, founder of Son 14 and Adalberto Álvarez y su Son

*Indiscutiblemente César, Pupy, Pedroso es uno de los grandes pianistas de la música cubana de todos los tiempos. Su nombre puede ocupar un merecido lugar junto al de Luis 'Lili' Martínez Griñán o Antonio María Romeu, pues al igual que ellos hicieron anteriormente, él también transformó la sonoridad del piano dentro de las proyecciones estéticas por donde cursaba la más auténtica cubanía. Su excelente dominio y manejo de las más legítimas tradiciones soneras hacen que sus 'tumbaos', por muy modernos que nos puedan parecer en su concepción armónica, se encuentren enraizados en aquellos modelos clásicos que nacieron hace más de cien años en la montañosa región de la Sierra Maestra.*

*Por tanto felicito la idea de Kevin Moore de escribir este libro sobre Pupy y su fabulosa carrera artística dentro de la música cubana.*

**Dr. Olavo Alén Rodríguez**

author of *From Afro-Cuban Music to Salsa*, former director of CIDMUC, Havana, Cuba

*Volume 10 of 'Beyond Salsa Piano' is an indispensable resource for any modern Latin pianist. Kevin Moore is giving contemporary pianists an invaluable resource. The "Beyond Salsa Piano" series should be on every pianist's wish-list.*

**Dr. Paul de Castro**

pianist, composer, arranger, Professor of Music at California State University, Los Angeles

*The history of Cuban piano cannot be fully written without acknowledging the signature style of César 'Pupy' Pedrosó. Not only did he manage to carve a unique place for himself in the single-most influential popular ensemble of the post-modern era in Cuban music (Los Van Van), his instantly recognizable approach informed an entire generation of pianists on and off the island. His compositional and arranging technique would also remain firmly embedded in the Los Van Van repertoire even following his departure. Many of his tunes would become major hits for the band, a sign of his ability to shine in a territory often dominated by more well-known figures in popular dance music. All of these accolades aside, Pupy is also one of the most warm, genuine and humble people I ever had the pleasure to meet in my journey as a musician. His unique style on piano was what first intrigued me upon hearing my first Los Van Van tunes: what were those weird keyboards he was playing and why was he throwing in so many diminished chords?! I was simultaneously perplexed and motivated; I had to know more about this man and his approach that, clearly, was a major departure from the standard piano technique established by his predecessors, including Luis Martínez Griñán (Lilí), Pedro Justiz (Peruchín), Frank Emilio and others. After years of listening to recordings and imitating his style, I finally had the fortune to see and hear him live with Los Van Van in 1990 – by then he had 'graduated' to a slightly more sophisticated keyboard rig (thank goodness). And what I observed was a man so secure in his own pianistic vocabulary that the hordes of adoring (and hip- gyrating) fans were no distraction to his complete focus and passion for the music. Pupy's role as a bandleader would come much later, along with the daunting task of going up against some of Cuba's most adored and successful bands. But no matter, Pupy made it clear to the dance-loving public that he was still there to serve them, as is evident in the name he chose for his band: Los Que Son Son. Over the years we have seen a stylistic evolution in Cuban piano technique that has truly been the result of major changes – largely rhythmic as well as harmonic – and at the heart of this innovation is a man who has stayed true to his roots: César "Pupy" Pedrosó.*

**Rebeca Mauleón**

composer, pianist, author of *101 Montunos, Salsa Guidebook*

*When I saw Pupy y Los Que Son Son at Yoshi's in 2010, I had one reaction: "It just doesn't get any better than this." Thank you Pupy.*

**Bill Martínez**

producer, immigration attorney

# **BEYOND SALSA PIANO**

## **THE CUBAN TIMBA PIANO REVOLUTION**



### **VOLUME 12 • CÉSAR "PUPY" PEDROSO**

#### **PART 3: LOS VAN VAN IN THE 1990s**

**KEVIN MOORE**

audio and video companion products available at [www.beyondsalsa.info/purchase](http://www.beyondsalsa.info/purchase)

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# Introduction to the *Beyond Salsa Piano* Series

The *Beyond Salsa Bass* series can be used as a stand-alone bass course, or as a companion series to *Beyond Salsa Piano*, the latter enabling you to practice each exercise along with a friend or band member who plays piano. *Beyond Salsa Bass* includes a corresponding bass tumbao for every piano tumbao in *Beyond Salsa Piano*.

That said, each bass series book is much longer than its piano counterpart, and quite a bit more ambitious, especially the first four volumes. The bass books contain many additional tumbaos and conceptual exercises that go well beyond the piano books. Music history and music theory are also given significantly more space and attention in the bass series.

## Part 1: The Five Introductory Volumes



Each series begins with five volumes that start at the beginning level and work their way systematically through history, finally arriving at the modern genre of *timba*.

<i>Beyond Salsa Piano</i>	Volume	<i>Beyond Salsa Bass</i>
<i>changüí, rumba, danzón, son, son montuno</i>	1	<i>changüí, rumba, danzón, son, son montuno</i>
<i>danzón-mambo</i> , charangas, conjuntos and big bands of the 1950s	2	<i>son montuno</i> (continued) <i>danzón-mambo</i> , charangas, conjuntos and big bands of the 1950s
Cuban music from 1960-1989, Part 1	3	<i>salsa</i> , Cuban music from 1960-1989, <i>descargas</i> and other antecedents of Latin jazz
Cuban music from 1960-1989, Part 2	4	Introduction to <i>timba</i>
Introduction to <i>timba</i>	5	Advanced <i>timba</i> , <i>reguetón</i> , <i>bachata</i> , Cuban rock

As you can see, Volumes 1 and 2 match up almost perfectly, except that the bass series adds an extensive additional section on Arsenio Rodríguez and *son montuno* in Volume 2. Volumes 3 and 4 of the piano series are combined in Volume 3 of the bass series, which also has a section on the *salsa* and pre-*salsa* music of Puerto Rico and New York. Salsa was not covered in the piano series, as salsa piano has already been thoroughly covered by Rebeca Mauleón in her *Salsa Guidebook* and



*101 Montunos*. The bass series covers *timba* in two volumes instead of one because the bassist plays such a pivotal role in the rhythm section gears.

## Part 2: Individual Artists



Top Left: Pupy Pedrosa, Lower Left: Tirso Duarte, Center: Alain Pérez, Top Right: Calixto Oviedo, Lower Right: Melón Lewis  
Tirso photo by Pierre Vignaca, Alain photo courtesy Markbass, other photos by Tom Ehrlich

From Volume 6 onwards, each volume of each series is devoted to the style of one musician. These volumes have their own philosophy and game plan:

- Find the very best musicians. As of this writing, the bass series features Alain Pérez; the percussion series features Calixto Oviedo; and the piano series includes Melón Lewis, Pupy Pedrosa and Tirso Duarte.
- Avoid asking the musicians to self-analyze or participate in the pedagogic process any more than necessary.
- On a case-by-case basis, find the most *natural* way to capture each musician doing what he or she does on recordings and at concerts.
- Convert these captured performances – whether MIDI, audio, or video – into bite-size exercises that can be easily studied, understood and assimilated by a non-Cuban musician.
- Never ask the reader to learn an exercise without demonstrating exactly how it relates to a given genre, band, song or the style of a specific musician.

Volumes 6-9 of each series are directly linked because their subjects – Melón Lewis (piano) and Alain Pérez (bass) – played side-by-side in the legendary 1996-1998 Issac Delgado Group. Each is arguably the greatest player of the timba era on his respective instrument.

The songs covered are identical (until Volume 9, when Melón left Issac's group) and the video products include the two musicians playing along with each other. Melón's tumbaos are also present in one channel of the audio products for the Alain books.

			
		scheduled for release in 2015	scheduled for release in 2015

The following chart summarizes all of this information.

### Corresponding Bass Tumbaos for *Beyond Salsa Piano*

<i>Beyond Salsa Piano</i>	<i>Beyond Salsa Bass</i>
Volume 1	Volume 1
Volume 2	Volume 2
Volume 3	Volume 3
Volume 4	Volume 3
Volume 5	Volume 4, Volume 5
Volume 6	Volume 6
Volume 7	Volume 7
Volume 8	Volume 8
Volume 9	Volume 9

With the Pupy Pedrosó (Volumes 10 through 13) and Tirso Duarte (Volume 14) piano books, I began including the bass tumbaos in the piano books, so the linkage between the two series ends after Volume 9. I have sufficient MIDI material for books on Rolando Luna, Rodolfo “Peruchín” Argudín, Juan Carlos González and others. Additional volumes of *Beyond Salsa Bass* will cover bass artists yet to be determined. Feel free to send in your suggestions.

## **Audio and Video – How *Beyond Salsa* is Organized and Marketed**

With the exception of the *Understanding Clave and Clave Changes* book and audio package, each volume of the *Beyond Salsa* series consists of two or three separately sold products:

1. a book like this one with text and musical notation (hard-copy or eBook)
2. downloadable MP3 audio files demonstrating the musical examples, accompanied by a clave click track, at full-speed and in slow motion, with the left and right hands panned hard left and right (and with bass tumbaos in the case of the Pupy Pedrosa piano books)
3. when available, downloadable computer video files and physical DVDs showing a Cuban pianist performing each musical example at full speed, in slow motion, and with variations

You can choose any combination of the three to fit your personal style of learning.

### **Book**

The book you're reading now can be purchased on [www.createpace.com/3573348](http://www.createpace.com/3573348) as a hard-copy, paperback book. Alternatively, it can be viewed online and/or printed on your computer's printer from the website [www.latinpulsemusic.com/albums/show/408](http://www.latinpulsemusic.com/albums/show/408). The books contain music notation for each exercise in both 8<sup>th</sup> notes (American-style) and 16<sup>th</sup> notes (Cuban-style), as well as explanatory text and historical information. If you don't read music and aren't interested in the explanations and history, you can choose to buy only the audio and/or video products.

### **Audio**

The audio files do not come with the book. They're available as separate, downloadable products from [beyondsalsa.info/purchase](http://beyondsalsa.info/purchase). A smaller set of audio files is available as a free download. The links at the above site will allow you to preview audio, and download the free samples. For each notation example, there are two ultra-high quality MP3 files made directly from 24-bit wave files. The first is recorded at normal tempo and the second in slow motion. If there's bass, the bass is panned hard left and the piano hard right. If there's no bass, the piano left hand is panned hard left and the right hand is panned hard right. This way, you can use the balance control to learn one part at a time. The audio files can be burned to audio CDs or played on an MP3 player or computer.

### **Video**

Like the audio products, the videos are sold as separate downloads. Video downloads are only provided for later books focusing on individual artists. So there is no video for this book. There's currently video of Melón Lewis (piano), Alain Pérez (bass) and Calixto Oviedo (drums and timbales). You can sample some of it on YouTube or by following the links at [beyondsalsa.info](http://beyondsalsa.info). There is not currently any video for the Pupy Pedrosa books.

At the end of this book are the Beyond Salsa Catalog and Price List for all products released to date, with pictures, links and content descriptions. The most current catalog, with all links and more detailed descriptions, can always be found at [www.beyondsalsa.info](http://www.beyondsalsa.info). My email is [kevin@timba.com](mailto:kevin@timba.com).

# Introduction to Volume 12: Los Van Van in the Timba Era

Let's review Los Van Van's style periods:<sup>1</sup>

PERIOD	STYLE	YEAR	ALBUM	STUDIED IN VOLUMES:
I.	Changüí 68	1969	Los Van Van, Vol. 1	<i>BS Piano, Vol. 3 • BS Bass, Vol. 3</i>
II.	Early Songo	1970	Various Important Singles	
		1974	Los Van Van, Vol. 2 • <i>Tránsito</i>	
		1974	Los Van Van, Vol. 3	
		1976	Los Van Van, Vol. 4	
III.	Transition	1979	Los Van Van, Vol. 5	<i>Beyond Salsa Piano, Vol. 10</i>
		1980	Los Van Van, Vol. 6	
		1982	LVV, Vol. 7 • <i>El baile del buey cansao</i>	
IV	1980s Style	1983	LVV, Vol. 8 • <i>Qué pista</i>	
		1984	LVV, Vol. 9 • <i>Anda, muévete y ven</i>	
		1985	LVV, Vol. 10 • <i>La Habana, sí</i>	<i>Beyond Salsa Piano, Vol. 11</i>
		1986	LVV, Vol. 11 • <i>Eso que anda</i>	
		1987	LVV, Vol. 12 • <i>Al son del Caribe</i>	
		1988	LVV, Vol. 13 • <i>El negro no tiene na'</i>	
		1989	LVV, Vol. 14 • <i>Crónicas</i>	<i>Beyond Salsa Piano, Vol. 12</i>
V.	Transition	1990	LVV, Vol. 15 • <i>Aquí el que baila gana</i>	
		1992	<i>Azúcar</i>	
VI.	Timba	1994	<i>Lo último en vivo</i>	
		1996	<i>Ay Dios, ampárame</i>	
		1997	<i>Te pone la cabeza mala</i>	
		1999	<i>Llegó Van Van</i>	
VII.	Post-Pupy	2002	<i>En el Malecón de la Habana</i>	<i>Beyond Salsa Bass, Vol. 5</i>
		2004	<i>Chapeando</i>	
		2008	<i>Arrasando</i>	
		2011	<i>La maquinaria</i>	
		2014	<i>La fantasía</i>	

Period II marks the arrival of Changuito; Period III is a transition from the group's early songo style to their 1980s style; and Period VI is very clearly bookended by the departures of Pedrito Calvo (2000) and Pupy Pedrosó (2001), and the death of Juan Formell (2014). But as the next chart shows, the dividing line between Periods IV and V could easily be drawn in several places.

<sup>1</sup> My period boundaries are subjective. The albums listed are composed primarily of new songs. *En el Malecón* is a live album with four new originals; *Lo último en vivo* is a live album of entirely new material. *La fantasía* is the working title of a 2014 album that had been recorded, but not released, as of the publication of this book. There are also many live and compilation albums not shown here. The albums covered in this book are shaded in grey.

Many crucial changes in instrumentation and personnel occurred during our period of study:

1989 <i>Crónicas</i>	1990 <i>Aquí el que baila gana</i>	1992 <i>Disco Azúcar</i>	1994 <i>Lo último en vivo</i>	1996 <i>Ay Dios, ampárame</i>	1997 <i>Te pone la cabeza mala</i>	1999 <i>Llegó Van Van</i>
timbales/drums: Changuito			timbales/drums: Samuel Formell			
electric 4-string bass				upright “baby” bass		
vocalist: Pedrito Calvo						
vocalist: Mayito “Flaco” Valdés			vocalist: Mayito “El Poeta de la Rumba” Rivera			
(no third lead vocalist)		vocals/composer: Ángel Bonne		vocalist: Roberto “Robertón” Hernández		

In spite of this overlapping of style periods and personnel, the seven albums covered in this book make for an unusually compelling narrative centered around Juan Formell’s pop music genius as he steered his band through one of the stormiest periods in music history. The journey began in early 1989 with Los Van Van firmly established as Cuba’s top band. They capped the 1980s – a period of remarkably stylistic consistency – with one of their most perfect albums, *Crónicas*. Shortly afterwards, the timba deluge began, with each new album created against a musical landscape that was changing at a dizzying rate. As impressive as it is that Formell and Pupy – both entering into their 50s – were able to keep writing relevant hit songs, Formell’s flawless stewardship of the band was an even rarer feat. He pulled all the right levers at all the right times, identifying many of the greatest talents of the younger generation and integrating them seamlessly with the group’s older members. By the late-1990s, Van Van’s personnel ran the gamut of age demographics:

joined in 1969:	Juan Formell	bassist, songwriter, leader
	Pupy Pedroso	pianist, songwriter
	Julio Noroña	güiro-player
	Gerardo Miró	violinist
joined in the 1970s:	Pedrito Calvo	lead vocalist
joined in the 1980s:	Manolo Labarrera	conguero
	Hugo Morejón	trombonist, arranger
	Edmundo “Mundo” Pina	trombonist, percussionist
	Alvaro Collado	trombonist
joined in the 1990s:	Samuel Formell	drummer, songwriter
	Mayito Rivera	lead vocalist, songwriter
	Boris Luna	keyboardist, songwriter
	Robertón Hernández	lead vocalist
	Pedrito Fajardo	violinist
	Jorge Leliebre	flutist, songwriter, corista

Amid all these dramatic stylistic, cultural and personnel changes, Pupy’s style – both as a pianist and as a composer – remained remarkably stable. Formell kept modifying his style to remain popular

and relevant to the younger generation, but Pupy accomplished the even more unlikely feat finding a style and a voice that stayed popular and relevant *without* major modifications. His first compositions, 1979's *El bate de aluminio* and *Tal como empezó* would be right at home in the 1990s or 2000s. Part of this stems from the fact that Pupy rarely borrows from current trends, avoiding the pitfall of producing ultra-modern songs that sound dated after a few years. Pupy didn't change so much as he simply got better. More of his songs and arrangements were major "A-side" hits like *Disco Azúcar*, *Que le den candela*, *El negro está cocinando*, *La fruta*, and *Ni bombones ni caramelos*.

LVV Compositions	LVV Arrangements	Non-LVV Compositions
<i>Cuatro años de ausencia</i>	<i>Ahora dime si me quieres</i>	<i>Tú quisiera ser la fiera</i>
<i>Tranquilo Mota</i>	<i>Me Basta con pensar</i>	<i>Parece mentira</i>
<i>Esto está bueno</i>	<i>Que le den candela</i>	<i>Homenaje a ma' y pa'</i>
<i>Se acabó la tristeza</i>	<i>La protesta de las gallinas</i>	<i>Rico timbalero</i>
<i>Disco Azúcar</i>	<i>Si tú te vas</i>	<i>Ese huevo quiere sal</i>
<i>Con el destino no se puede</i>	<i>Abusadora me enteré</i>	<i>Yo soy tu padre</i>
<i>Mándalo y ven</i>	<i>La shopimaníaca</i>	
<i>Hierbero ven</i>		
<i>La fruta</i>		
<i>Ni bombones ni caramelos</i>		
<i>Lo que dejó Sebastián</i>		
<i>La bomba soy yo</i>		
<i>Temba, Tumba y Timba</i>		
<i>El negro está cocinando</i>		

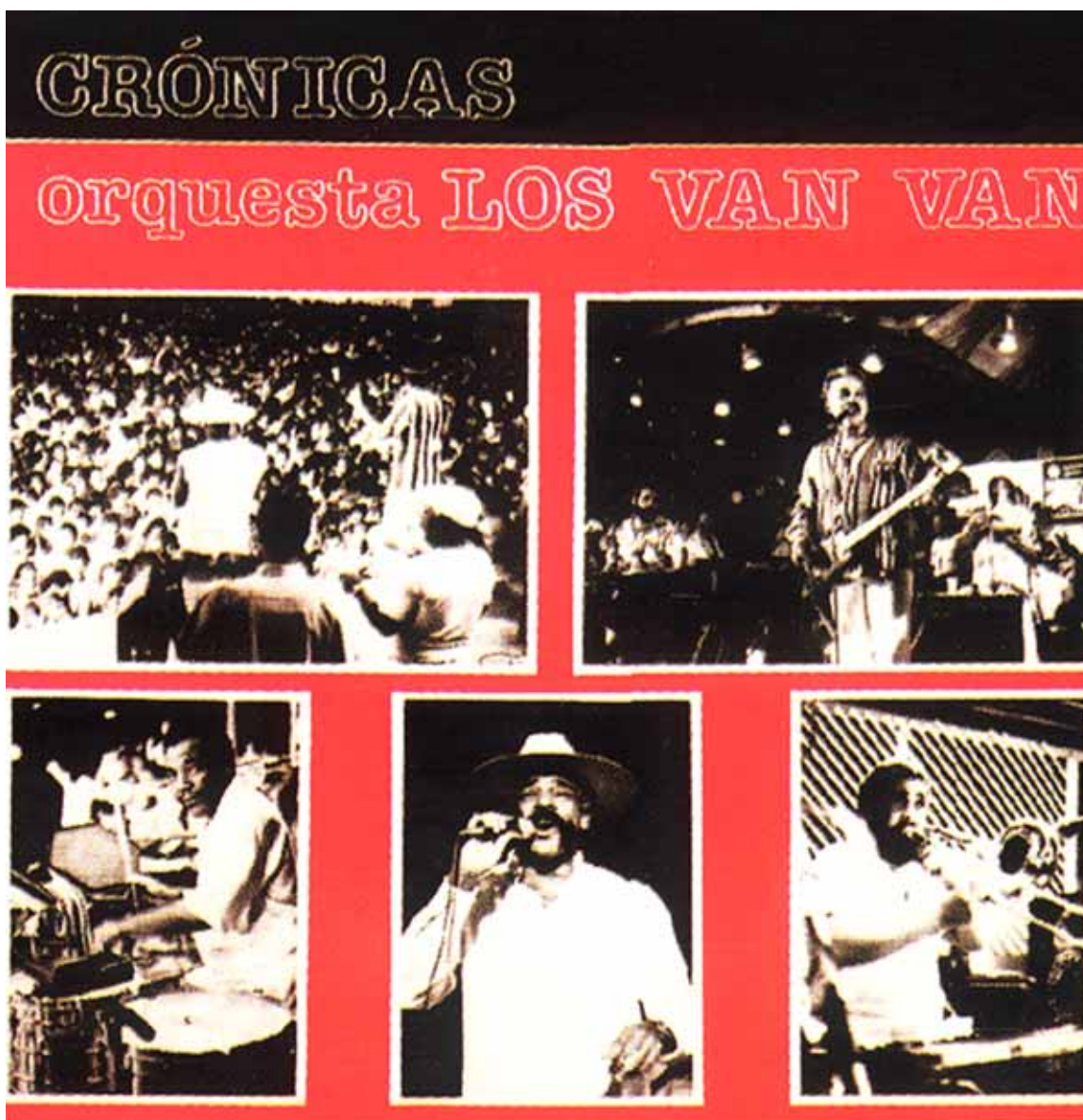
Nor did Pupy's piano style change drastically. Again, it just got better. He used more contrary motion, more extra left hand notes, more grace note rolls, and turned out more song-specific hooks like *El negro está cocinando*, *Qué tiene Van Van*, *Hierbero ven* and *Quién no ha dicho una mentira*.



Pupy with Julito Noroña (son of Van Van güirero Julio Noroña) • Yoshi's SF • 2010 • photo by Tom Ehrlich



## Chapter 1: *Crónicas* (1989)



Los Van Van: *Crónicas* (1989) • EGREM *La colección*, Vol. 14

The period from 1983 to 1989 was a remarkably stable one for Los Van Van. They had no major personnel or stylistic changes and released a hit album every year, like clockwork. The last, and to my ear the best, of these albums was *Crónicas*, recorded in February 1989, just before the collapse of the Soviet Union sent Cuba careening into the chaotic, experimental, economically disastrous and musically triumphant decade of the 1990s.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> There are valid reasons to extend this second major style period outward in either direction. For example, the trombones were added in 1980 and Changuito left in 1992.

## Concept Albums



Juan Formell in Parque Lennon, Havana • photo by Patrick Bonnard (patrickbonnard.com)

An inveterate Beatles fan, Juan Formell was enamored of the idea of imbuing each album with its own personality and narrative arc. *Crónicas* is one of his experiments with what we'll call the "bookend" approach – beginning and ending an album with powerful tracks that combine in some way with a theme and reprise to create thematic unity, a satisfying climax, and a sense of closure.

The original "concept album" was *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, and even that iconic masterpiece has not fully escaped the complaints of some critics that a dramatically paced tracklist and a reprise of the opening are insufficient to warrant the lofty claims of conceptual integrity put forth by those championing the album.

The musical structure of *Crónicas* is a variant of the *Sgt. Pepper's* template – placing its strongest material at the beginning and end, and then bookending the whole affair with two different and compelling versions of the theme song, in this case, *Yo sé que van van*. But beyond the tracklist and presentation, it's the songwriting itself that provides *Crónicas* with its most convincing claim of "concept album" status. The album's title announces its mission statement – the popular song as a social chronicle<sup>1</sup> – and each song showcases a different aspect of this approach. The closest the

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<sup>1</sup> In this sense, it might be more accurate to call Los Van Van a "concept band" because Pupy and Formell have always consciously aspired to write songs that collectively create a social chronicle of life in postrevolutionary Cuba.



*Me basta con pensar* is a rare case of Pupy arranging a song by Formell (in general, each composer arranged his own material).

***Me basta con pensar 1 • Audio Tracks 2-06a & 2-06b***



In the style of: *Me basta con pensar* • 2-3 clave • 99 bpm • 1990 • Los Van Van: *Aquí el que baila gana* • EGREM CD 0140

*Me basta's* arrangement was hugely influential on later timba, most specifically on Manolito y su Trabuco, whose biggest hit, *Marcando la distancia*, owes a great debt to *Me basta con pensar 2*. Still later, the group Salsa Mayor created one of their most popular coros (*Recoge y vete*) by marrying this same progression to the rhythmic and syllabic hook of a later coro of Pupy's from *Hierbero ven* ("despójate"). We'll study *Hierbero ven* in Chapter 4.



Manolito Simonet (left) recorded two of Pupy's songs (*Parece mentira* and *Yo soy tu padre*) on his brilliant 2001 CD, *Para que baile Cuba* • photo by Bill Wolfer

Whatever Pedrito's reason for leaving, it can't have been for a lack of great material. Formell's *Mi chocolate*, like *El negro está cocinando*, is a classic, perfectly suited for Pedrito's voice and persona.<sup>1</sup>

***Mi chocolate 1* • Audio Tracks 7-08a & 7-08b**

The musical score for 'Mi chocolate 1' is presented in two systems. The first system is in 4/4 time, featuring a piano introduction with chords in the right hand and a melodic line in the left hand. The second system is in 2/2 time, continuing the piano introduction with similar harmonic and melodic structures. The score is written for piano, with treble and bass staves for each system.

In the style of: *Mi chocolate* • 2-3 clave • 85 bpm • 1999 • Los Van Van: *Llegó Van Van* • Havana Caliente 83227-2

***Mi chocolate 2* • Audio Tracks 7-09a & 7-09b**

The musical score for 'Mi chocolate 2' is presented in two systems. The first system is in 4/4 time, featuring a piano introduction with chords in the right hand and a melodic line in the left hand. The second system is in 2/2 time, continuing the piano introduction with similar harmonic and melodic structures. The score is written for piano, with treble and bass staves for each system.

In the style of: *Mi chocolate* • 2-3 clave • 85 bpm • 1999 • Los Van Van: *Llegó Van Van* • Havana Caliente 83227-2

<sup>1</sup> Formell generally retired a song when a singer left, but he had Mayito Rivera record a new version of *Mi chocolate* for *En el malecón de La Habana*.

## Epilogue



Juan Formell (1943-2014) • photo by Tom Ehrlich

After the triumphs of 1999, Los Van Van suffered a series of setbacks. First, problems with their recording contract delayed work on a follow-up album to the Grammy winning *Llegó Van Van*. Pedrito Calvo left the group in late 2000, and was replaced by two singers – Abel “Lele” Rasalps (the son of one of Van Van’s founding singers) and Yenisel Valdés, the group’s first female member.<sup>1</sup> Then, in 2001, George W. Bush’s election (if that’s what you’d call it) blocked Cuban bands from touring the United States.

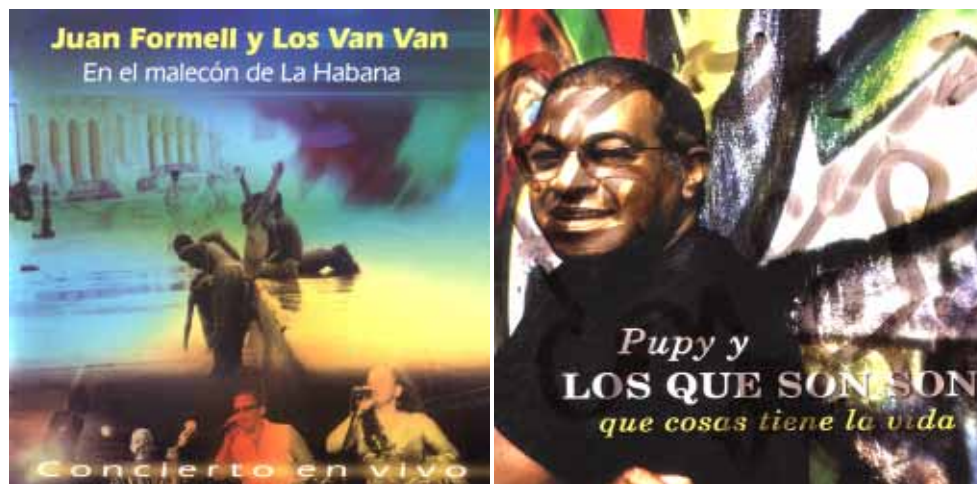
Van Van had still not recorded again when Pupy himself left, in mid-2001, although they had already begun performing the final song he would write for them, *Qué cosas tiene la vida*, sung by the aforementioned Lele. In ironic accordance with the title – Lele had added a live muela-coro routine in which he would tell the crowd that everyone was saying that Van Van was having personnel problems, but – he assured them – here they were *en la calle otra vez* – all was well. In a sense, things did in fact turn out quite well for fans because both Pupy and Formell kept churning out great

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<sup>1</sup> She had earlier earned the distinction of being NG La Banda’s first female member.

songs. Pupy's Los Que Son Son has been tremendous, as has the revamped Los Van Van, which began to feature more creative input from the new pianist, Roberto "Cucurucho" Valdés, Samuel, Boris Luna and Jorge Leliebre. "Van Van to Son Son" has joined the storied list of win-win spinoffs:<sup>1</sup>

1949	Arcaño	→	Fajardo y sus Estrellas	1973	Barretto	→	Típica 73
1952	Arsenio	→	Conj. Chappottín, Conj. Modelo	1988	Revé	→	Dan Den
1955	Orq. América	→	Orq. Jorrín, Orq. América del 55	1995	Issac Delgado	→	Klímax
1958	Revé	→	Ritmo Oriental	1998	Bamboleo	→	Azúcar Negra
1962	Cortijo	→	El Gran Combo	1997/8	Charanga Habanera	→	Dany Lozada, Char. Forever
1969	Revé	→	Los Van Van	2001	Los Van Van	→	Los Que Son Son



Los Van Van's first post-Pupy album, *En el malecón de La Habana* (2002)

Pupy's first post-Los Van Van album, *Qué cosas tiene la vida* (2002)

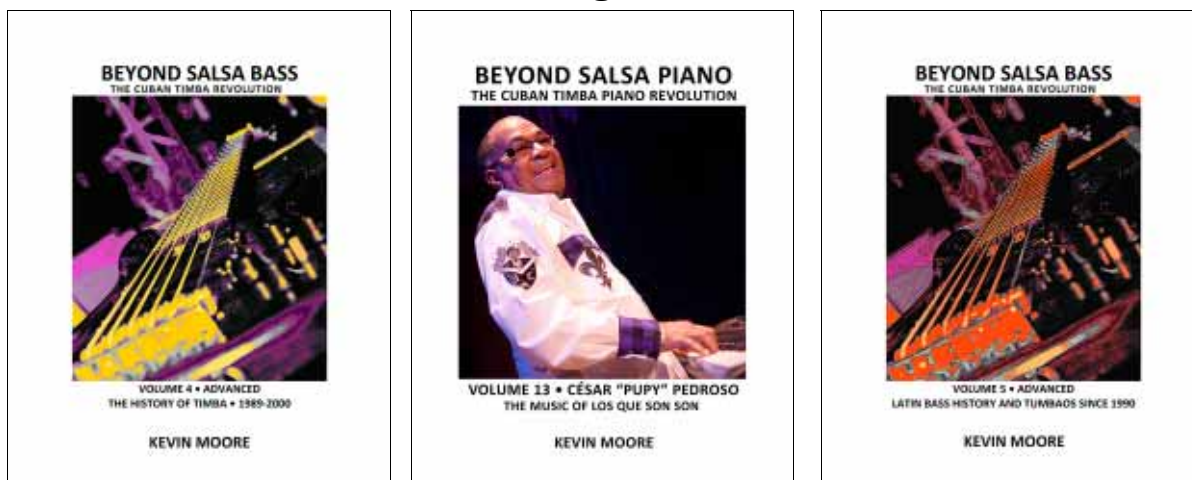
Los Van Van produced several excellent albums in the 2000s, with new pianist Roberto "Cucurucho" Valdés. In 2011, Mayito left and was replaced by Mandy Cantero, a founding member of Pupy y Los Que Son Son. Manolo Labarrera, Van Van's conguero since 1981, died in 2012 and was replaced by Yoel Cuesta.

Juan Formell passed away in 2014 during the writing of this book and as we go to press, the band is continuing under the leadership of Samuel and (it's been reported) his older brother Juan Carlos Formell. The new bassist is Arnaldo Jiménez, who was previously with Issac Delgado, Paulito FG, and Elito Revé, as well as having been the leader of Arnaldo y la Cosmopólita.

After 32 years with Los Van Van, Pupy left in mid-2001 to form his own band, Los Que Son Son, which became the most exciting band of the early 2000s and continues to thrive, recording and touring regularly as of this writing. While not technically a member, Changuito played a huge role in helping Pupy recruit a brilliant and original rhythm section and architect a strikingly new style that differs greatly not only from Van Van's but from all the other timba bands.

<sup>1</sup> My criterion is that the first band must continue at the same level of success after the spinoff, so Opus 13 to Paulito FG wouldn't count.

## Looking Ahead



Los Que Son Son has six albums as of this writing: *Qué cosas tiene la vida* (2002), *El buenagente* (2005), *De la Timba a Pogolotti* (2005), *Tranquilo que yo controlo* (2008), *Siempre Pupy* (2011) and *Sin limite* (2014). An earlier album, *Timba the New Generation* (2000), recorded as a side project shortly before Pupy left Los Van Van, contains various songs that made their way into the repertoire of the new group. Los Que Son Son will be the sole topic of ***Beyond Salsa Piano, Volume 13***.

While we're "looking ahead", Volumes 4 and 5 of *Beyond Salsa Bass*, which doubles as a history series, will probably be published next. ***Beyond Salsa Bass, Volume 4*** covers timba from 1989 to 2001, putting the music we've studied in this book into its historical context alongside NG La Banda, Charanga Habanera, Issac Delgado, Manolín el Médico de la Salsa, Paulito FG, Manolito y su Trabuco, Bamboleo, Klímax, Azúcar Negra, Revé, et al. ***Beyond Salsa Bass, Volume 5*** will cover Cuban music from 2001 to the present, as well as developments in Nuyolatin and Puerto Rican music since 1989, where *Beyond Salsa Bass, Vol. 3* left off in its history of the music of those two great Latin music regions.



Pupy and Formell at rehearsal • 1997 or 1998 • photo: Robert Schwentker



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**Finale Guru:** Peter Thomsen

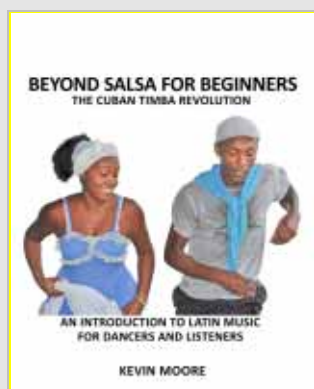
## About the Author



Kevin Moore and Abel Robaina interview Juan Formell • San Francisco, CA • 2010 • photo by Tom Ehrlich

Kevin Moore (kevin@timba.com, @twitandotimba) is the co-founder and music editor of the world's largest Cuban music website, [www.timba.com](http://www.timba.com), contributing the free online multimedia book series, *The Roots of Timba*, many articles, discographies, record analyses and, for over 10 years, the Cuban music blog *La última*. In the early 2000s, Kevin co-wrote the critically-acclaimed *Tomás Cruz Conga Method*, which will soon be followed by *Beyond Salsa Congas*. As musical director, composer, arranger and violinist of the California-based salsa band Orquesta Gitano, Kevin co-produced the 1998 CD *Salsa gitana*, songs from which have been used in films and television. *Salsa gitana* can be purchased as an audio download or sheet music charts at [latinpulsemusic.com](http://latinpulsemusic.com).

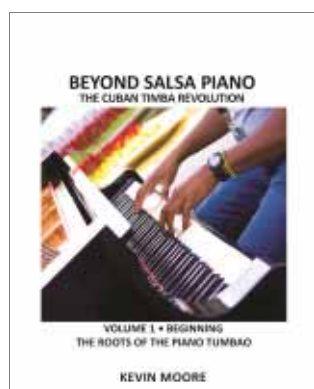
## The *Beyond Salsa* Catalog – 2014



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*Beyond Salsa for Beginners* alternates between singing, dancing and clapping exercises and listening tours covering the full history of Latin music. It also contains an extensive glossary, and a long section on the special challenges of Afro-Cuban folkloric music.

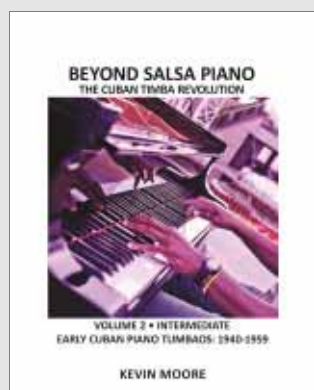
This book shares several chapters with *Beyond Salsa for Percussion, Vol. 1*. The latter contains many more advanced rhythms, but not the listening tours. The two books can be purchased together for a reduced rate by contacting the author directly. Each book has both a free audio download and a \$10 audio download.



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*Beyond Salsa Piano, Volume 1* begins around 1900 and covers the origins of the tumbao concept using exercises adapted from genres – such as *changüí*, *danzón*, and *son* – that pre-date the use of piano as the primary instrument for tumbaos in Cuban music. This material is designed to be playable by near-beginners, musicians who play other instruments, and arrangers seeking to acquire a basic facility on piano.

Among the artists covered are Grupo Changüí de Guantánamo, Sexteto Habanero, Sexteto Boloña and Arsenio Rodríguez.



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*Beyond Salsa Piano, Volume 2* covers the period from 1940-1959, during which the piano became a constant and dominant presence in nearly every Latin rhythm section, and during which Cuban music had a profound global influence on all forms of popular music. The difficulty level ranges from beginning to intermediate.

Artists covered include: Arcaño y sus Maravillas, Orquesta Aragón, Chappottín y sus Estrellas, Celia Cruz y Sonora Matancera, Beny Moré, Pérez Prado, Orquesta Sensación, José Fajardo y sus Estrellas, and Conjunto Modelo.



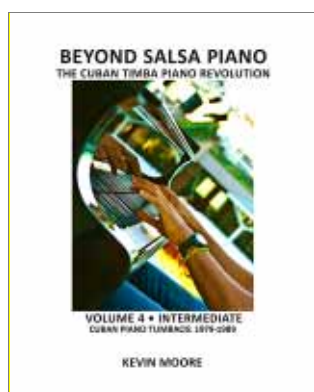
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***Beyond Salsa Piano, Volume 3*** begins our coverage of the eclectic period between the Cuban Revolution and the Fall of the Berlin Wall – from 1959 to 1989.

**Volume 3** covers *mozambique*, *pilón*, *changüí-68*, *songo*, and artists such as Irakere, Ritmo Oriental, Los Van Van, Pacho Alonso, Orquesta Aragón, Opus 13, Orquesta 440, and AfroCuba.

Volume 3 also contains an extensive section on Afro-Cuban folkloric rhythms and their application to popular music piano-playing.



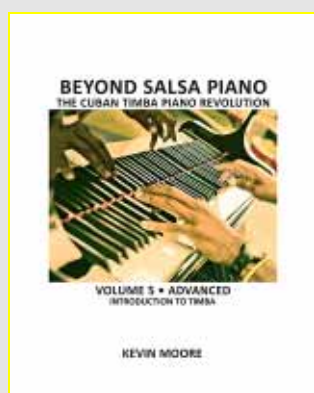
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***Beyond Salsa Piano, Volume 4*** continues our survey of post-revolution, pre-timba Cuban piano styles.

Styles covered include those of Elio Revé y su Charangón, Rumbavana, Son 14, Adalberto Álvarez y su Son, Orquesta Original de Manzanillo, Maravillas de Florida, Orquesta Aliamén, and Los Karachi.

We also introduce the concept of “controlled improvisation”, which runs through the entire series.



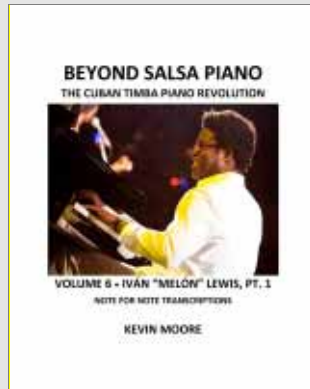
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***Beyond Salsa Piano, Volume 5*** introduces the *timba* genre that began in the 1990s. Volume includes:

- a history and discography of the timba era
- a detailed description of rhythm section “gears”
- a list and analysis of the 10 most important piano innovations of the 1990s
- 32 instructional tumbaos on the same chord progression, demonstrating these innovations
- a Harmony Appendix with hundreds of timba tumbao chord progressions in Roman numerals



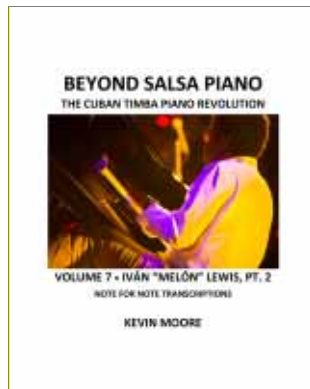


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Beginning with **Volume 6**, each book concentrates on the style of one Cuban pianist, with note-for-note transcriptions, based in most cases on MIDI files performed by the volume's featured pianist.

Volumes 6 through 9 are on Iván "Melón" Lewis, the phenomenally innovative pianist who played with The Issac Delgado group from 1995 to 1998.

**Volume 6** begins with Melón's biography and discography and continues to in-depth studies of his piano style on the extended live concert versions of *No me mires a los ojos* and *La vida sin esperanza*.



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**Beyond Salsa Piano, Volume 7** moves on to Melón's approach to two more live classics of the Issac Delgado group: *Luz viajera* (arranged by Melón) and *Por qué paró*.

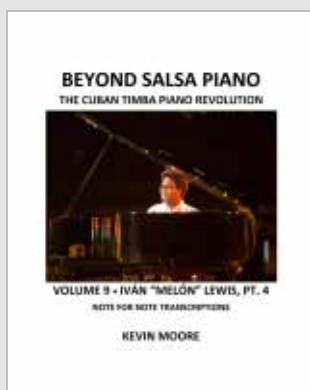
In the process of detailing the many types of tumbaos Melón uses in these extended live arrangements we cover the timba gears of marcha, muela, bomba and presión and delve even more deeply into Melón's approach to "controlled improvisation".



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**Beyond Salsa Piano, Volume 8** continues our chronological survey of Melón's unique tumbaos and improvisational live style with *Deja que Roberto te toque* and the extremely polyrhythmic *Brindando con el alma*.

*La chica del sol* is then used as a vehicle to present exercises to understand how timba relates to salsa and Latin jazz.

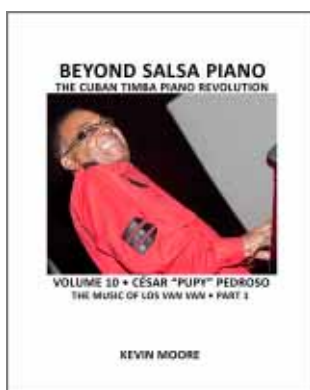


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**Beyond Salsa Piano, Volume 9**, our final volume on Iván “Melón” Lewis, is the longest of the series and includes his unusually sophisticated approach to cuerpos as well as tumbaos. It begins with Melón’s approach to the I-IV-V-IV progression, using his arrangement of *Catalina* as a jumping-off point. We then cover the remaining important live staples of the Delgado repertoire during Melón’s tenure: *Con la punta del pie*, *Por la naturaleza*, *Se te fue la mano*, *Pa’ que te salves*, and *La competencia* (“Hit Parade”).

Finally, we cover the tumbao from *Movimiento*, from Melón’s latest Latin jazz album, and a tumbao from his recent work with Manolín, el Médico de la Salsa.

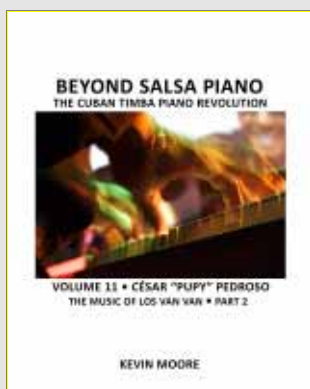


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**Beyond Salsa Piano, Volume 10** begins our study of César “Pupy” Pedrosó of Los Van Van and Los Que Son Son.

Volume 10 begins with extensive biography and discography chapters and covers piano tumbaos for songs first released between 1979 (when Pupy began to compose for Los Van Van) and 1983, including *El bate de aluminio*, *Fallaste a sacar tu cuenta*, *Después que te casaste* and many others. On the classic *Hoy se cumplen seis semanas*, we present a full chart of Pupy’s new arrangement with his current group, Los Que Son Son.

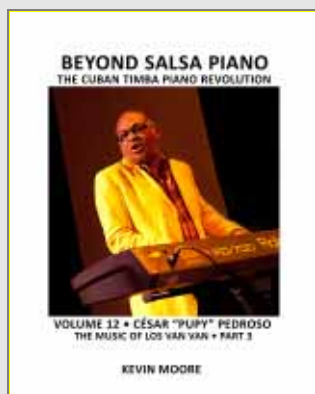


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**Beyond Salsa Piano, Volume 11** covers the next phase of Pupy’s career, 1984-1988 with Los Van Van, including songs such as *Si quieres que te llegue pronto*, *Ya tu campana no suena*, and *Será que se acabó*.

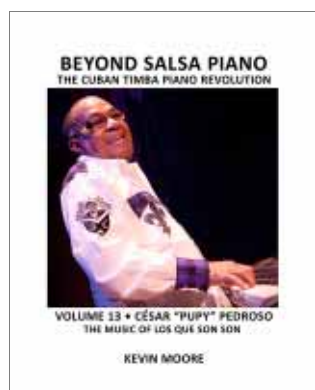
Also included are complete piano and bass charts for *El buenagente* and *Calla calla*, based on the modern Los Que Son Son versions.



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***Beyond Salsa Piano, Volume 12*** covers the remainder of Pupy's career with Los Van Van (1989-2001). In light of the death of Juan Formell in 2014, it also serves as a history and retrospective of this pivotal period in the history of Cuba's most important and popular band. The albums covered are *Crónicas*, *Aquí el que baila gana*, *Azúcar*, *Lo último en vivo*, *Ay Dios ampárame*, *Te pone la cabeza mala* and *Llegó Van Van*.



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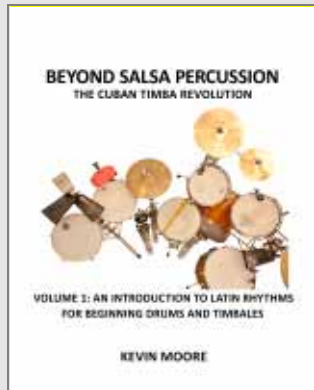
***Beyond Salsa Piano, Volume 13***, in progress, is our final volume on Pupy Pedrosó, will cover his work with his own group, Los Que Son Son, founded in 2001 and one of Cuba's top groups today.



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***Beyond Salsa Piano, Volume 14*** is our first volume on Tirso Duarte, covering his early tumbacos with Charanga Habanera. We expect to have three or four volumes in total on this phenomenally talented pianist, writer and singer.

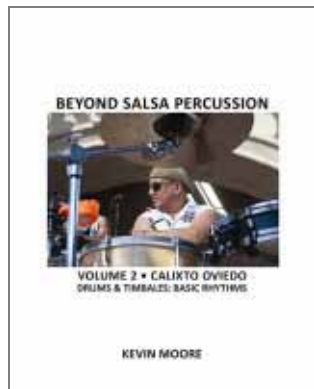


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***Beyond Salsa Percussion, Volume 1*** is for people who are considering taking drum or timbales lessons and want to learn to clap and sing the basic rhythms to prepare themselves.

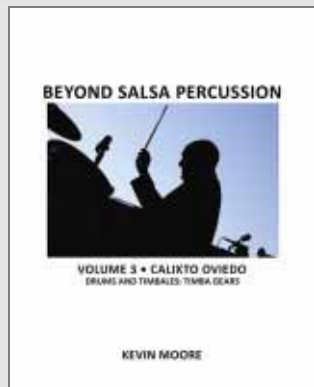
This book shares several chapters with *Beyond Salsa for Beginners* before moving on to add more advanced rhythms. The two books can be purchased together for a reduced rate by contacting the author directly.



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***Beyond Salsa Percussion, Volume 2: Basic Rhythms*** is the first of two books on legendary timbalero/drummer Calixto Oviedo, who played with Pacho Alonso, Adalberto Álvarez and the first timba band, NG La Banda. The book begins with a long biography and discography section and presents Calixto's approaches to six classic Cuban rhythms, ranging from traditional timbales to various combinations of timbales and drumset. The rhythms covered are: ***danzón, chachachá, mozambique, pilón, simalé and upa-upa.***

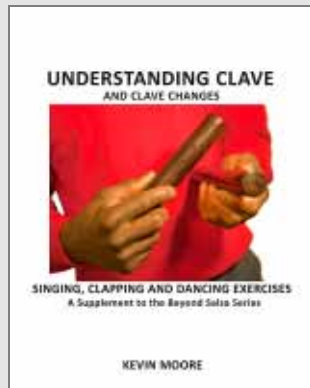


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***Beyond Salsa Percussion, Volume 3: Timba Gears*** is one of our longest and most adventurous books, explaining what gears are and demonstrating the almost endless ways that each can be orchestrated on timbales and drumset.

In addition to exhaustively detailing Calixto's styles, the book explains how the various top Cuban bands produce their signature rhythm section ***sellos*** by dividing the rhythmic responsibilities creatively between the percussionists. The gears covered are: ***marcha abajo, marcha arriba, marcha de mambo, muela, presión and bomba.***



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**Understanding Clave and Clave Changes** is a special supplement to the *Beyond Salsa* series. It's divided into four sections, and uses hands-on singing, clapping and dancing exercises to become intimate with clave and avoid the excruciating intellectual confusion that results from trying to learn it with one's left-brain!

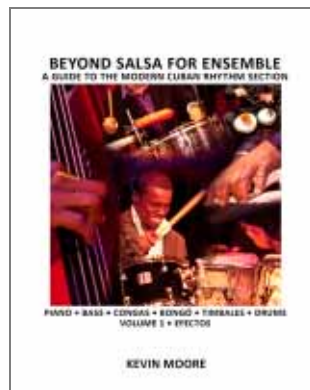
**Part 1:** For Beginners – What is Clave?

**Part 2:** Demystifying Clave Terminology

**Part 3:** Intermediate –Clave Direction

**Part 4:** Advanced –Clave Changes

Unlike the other books, the clave course absolutely requires both the audio files and book, so the audio files are provided as a free download to anyone who buys the hard-copy book or the eBook.



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**Beyond Salsa for Ensemble Vol. 1**, at 368 pages, with 464 audio files, is our most adventurous project to date.

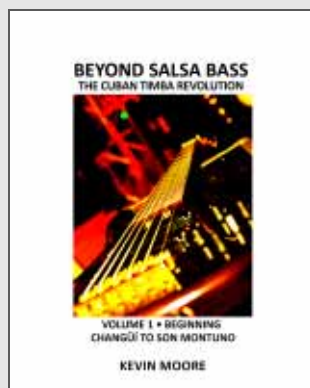
**Part 1: The Point of Departure: The Home Gear –**

Explains the differences between salsa and timba and teaches the most common timba groove, from which all other exercises begin.

**Part 2: Efectos –** 36 rhythm section breaks, or

*efectos*, completely notated, in 2-3 and 3-2 clave/

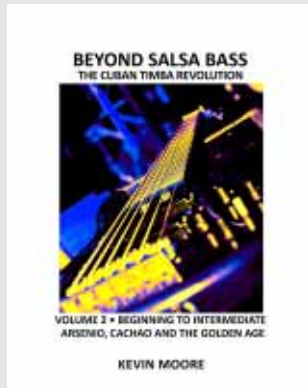
**Part 3: Complete Performance Chart –** A meticulous note-for-note transcription of all instruments for *El buenagente* by Pupy Pedrosó y Los Que Son Son.



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**Beyond Salsa Bass, Vol. 1** is for beginners. It includes bass parts for all the piano tumbaos in *Beyond Salsa Piano, Vol. 1*, but is a much longer book with many additional bass tumbaos from the same time genres – changüí, son, danzón, son montuno.

There's also a lengthy introductory chapter featuring a unique categorization system for the 16 most common generic bass tumbaos.

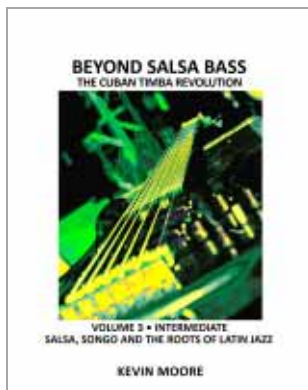


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***Beyond Salsa Bass, Volume 2: Arsenio, Cachao and the Golden Age*** – Volume 2 continues the study of Arsenio Rodríguez begun in the previous book with a 105 chronological survey of Arsenio’s cierres and diablos. There’s an extensive chapter on Cachao and Arcaño and a final chapter covering all of the artists and tumbaos corresponding to *Beyond Salsa Piano, Volume 2*.

Chapter 1 continues the Tumbao Theory approach begun in Volume 1, extending to 1-clave bass tumbaos and a study of the technical aspects of creating cierres.

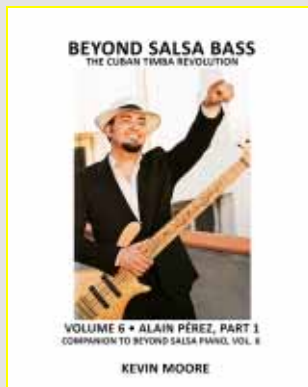


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***Beyond Salsa Bass, Volume 3: Salsa, Songo and the Roots of Latin Jazz*** – Volume 3 covers the bass tumbaos of Puerto Rico and New York, Cuban music between the Revolution and the timba era, and the descargas and Chano Pozo/Dizzy Gillespie collaborations that laid the groundwork for Latin jazz. At 441 pages, it’s the longest *Beyond Salsa* volume. The audio product includes well over 600 files. The tumbao theory chapter deals with playing through jazz changes in swing and Latin situations.

**Vols. 4 & 5 (post-1989)** are in progress.



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***Beyond Salsa Bass, Volume 6*** – closely mirrors *Beyond Salsa Piano*, with introductory volumes covering the history of Cuban bass, starting at the beginning level, and continuing with books about specific bassists. The introductory volumes will be released in late 2012 and early 2013. Volume 6, pictured here, was released in March 2012.



<div> </div> <div> <p> <a href="http://www.createpace.com/3810550">www.createpace.com/3810550</a>  <a href="http://www.latinpulsemusic.com/albums/show/TBD">www.latinpulsemusic.com/albums/show/TBD</a> </p> </div>	<p><b><i>Beyond Salsa Bass, Volume 7</i></b> – The second of four volumes on Alain Pérez, Volume 7 is the bass companion to Volume 7 of the piano series. It was released in late 2012. All books on Alain Pérez and Melón Lewis include video as well as audio companion products.</p> <p><b>Volumes 8 and 9</b> are in progress. Volumes 8 and 9 of the piano series are already available.</p>
<p>COMING</p>	<p><b><i>Beyond Salsa Piano, Vol. 13 (Los Que Son Son)</i></b>; many more volumes planned</p> <p><b><i>Beyond Salsa Bass, Vols. 4 &amp; 5 (timba)</i></b>; Vols. 8 &amp; 9 (Alain Pérez)</p> <p><b><i>Beyond Salsa for Ensemble, Vol. 2 (timba gears)</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Beyond Salsa Bongó</i></b> will feature Carlos Caro, winner of timba.com’s Readers’ Poll for Best Timba Bongosero. These books will begin with instruction in technique, starting from a beginning level and then work their way from the early son styles of bongó-playing to Caro’s timba style with Opus 13, Paulito FG and Jacqueline Castellanos.</p> <p><b><i>Beyond Salsa Congas</i></b> is in the development stages. It will hopefully include volumes on Tomás Cruz as well as other top congueros.</p>

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<i>Beyond Salsa for Beginners</i> • Introduction to Latin Music for Dancers & Listeners	\$30	\$15	free/\$10*		
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<i>Beyond Salsa for Ensemble</i> , Vol. 1 • Efectos	\$40	\$25	\$10		
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<i>Beyond Salsa Congas</i> , Vol. 1	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	

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