

Tito Puente - Puente Goes Jazz (1956)

Written by bluelover

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1. *What Is This Thing Called Love* 3:24 2. *Tiny-Not Ghengis* 2:52 3. *What Are You Doing, Honey?* 2:49 4. *Lotus Land* 4:55 5. *Lucky Dog* 3:25 6. *Birdland After Dark* 4:40 7. *That's Puente* 2:35 8. *Yesterdays* 4:38 9. *Terry Cloth* 4:59 10. *Tito'in* 2:59 Personnel: Tito Puente Composer, Leader, Percussion, Timbales, Vibraphone William Correa Bongos Allen Fields Sax (Alto) Vincent Frisaura Trumpet Barry Galbraith Guitar Alvin Gellers Piano Bernie Glow Trumpet Martin Holmes Saxophone Marty Holmes Sax (Tenor), Saxophone Dave Kurtzer Sax (Baritone), Saxophone Frank LaPinto Trumpet Allen Lehrfeld Saxophone Frank Lo Pinto Trumpet Gene Quill Saxophone Gene Rapett Trumpet Robert Rodriguez Bass Roberto Rodriguez Bass Gerald Sanfino Bass Mongo Santamaría Congas Dave Schildkraut Sax (Alto), Saxophone Todd Sommer Drums Nick Travis Trumpet Francis Williams Trumpet

Before deciding to go jazz, Mr. Puente's producers at RCA should have advised him to go take some lessons from Johnny Richards, Stan Kenton's fabulous writer-arranger of the big band Latin suite to end all big band Latin suites: Cuban Fire. Mr. Richards might have taught Mr. Puente that blaring, shrieking, ear-blasting trumpets in themselves do not make a satisfying "hot" Latin jazz session. Essential ingredients are feelings and emotions which are sorely missing from Tito Puente's jazz offering. The blaring brass in these recordings is rigid and statuesque. With TV star Doc Severinson as a trumpet soloist on this date, go figure. The reeds fare no better. Some of the reed soloists seem bent on proving that they can move faster than Speedy Gonzales on the musical scales. The only redeeming factor here is the rhythm section which is what one would expect from a timbales expert like Tito Puente. This is not putting down Tito Puente's talents as arranger. In the fifties he recorded a very good album for RCA entitled "Mucho Puente" in which he proved his mettle as arranger for Latin strings as well as tentettes and small Latin groups--with a telling effect. But as a jazzman, Mr. Puente should stick to what he does best: Salsa. ---Sammy Somekh

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One of Tito Puente's earliest jazz-oriented dates, this set (reissued on a 1993 Bluebird CD) matches Puente (doubling on vibes and timbales) with a big band and the bongos of William Correa. The music (mostly obscure originals plus three standards) swings, and although none of the sidemen became household names, (best-known is altoist Dave Schildkraut), the musicianship is fine. Actually, more notable than the fairly conventional music are two of the song titles: "Tiny Not Ghengis (Kahn)" and "That's A Puente!" --- Scott Yanow, Rovi

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