

Mi Solar (D/Cub)

Salsa, Timba, Latin-Jazz



photo: Kirsten Lenk

Musicians:

Mayelis Guyat (Cuba) – lead vocals, composition
Jotham Bleiberg – trumpet, composition, vocals
Linnett Carrillo (Cuba) – piano, vocals
Maike Scheel – bass, composition
Gabriele Kostas – congas, percussion
Philipp Bombste Kullen – timbales, drums
Miguel Lagos – percussion, vocals
Damian Blanco (Cuba) – vocals

+++ Out now: In March 2008 ***Mi Solar*** published their first CD: "Amistad" at Skycap records +++

Mi Solar – Salsa, Timba, Latinjazz!

solar, (el) (m.): (Cuban) inner courtyard; a place of pulsating life, with parties and dancing to salsa rhythms.

Cuba in Berlin - That's ***Mi Solar***, the salsa band that embodies what its name implies. Any place where these musicians perform is transformed into a throbbing grooving atmosphere. ***Mi Solar*** plays an electrifying hot and danceable mix of traditional and modern Cuban music, with surprisingly fresh arrangements of Latin-American classics as well as original compositions, spiced with Latin-Jazz elements. The audience gets down, it's hot and everyone's dancing, and what about a mojito? A perfect Cuban atmosphere!

Band Biography

Mi Solar played its first concert in Brandenburg in March, 2004.

Since then, ***Mi Solar*** has performed at:

- **Open Air Events:** with the Carnival of the cultures - Berlin's largest multi-cultural street festival (2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008), 3. Potsdam event night, summer festival, English Garden/ Berlin, Festival at the Nauener Tor/ Potsdam,
- **in salsa discos and clubs:** Fontane Klub/ Brandenburg a.d.Havel, HAVANNA/ Berlin, Tropicando/ Potsdam, Casa Latina/ Dresden, Floridita/ Vienna, Circulo/ Munich, Kaffee Burger/ Berlin, Felix Restaurant, Junction Bar
- **Festivals:** Montreux Jazz Festival/ Switzerland (2005/ 2006), Latin-Chem (Latin Music & Dance Festival), Praterinsselfestiva/ Munich, Museumsinsel Festival/ Berlin (in cooperation with Piranha Events), BergmannstraÙejazzt/ Berlin, Jazz- und Bluestage/ Zinnowitz
- **and:** Randlage/ Eschede, Schloss Wackerbarth, German Red Croce, Deutsche Kinderhilfe, Bundesministerium für Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung, Werkstatt der Kulturen/ Berlin, Palais in der Kulturbrauerei/ Berlin, 2. Pub tour/ Belzig, Long Night of the Museums/ Berlin, Music in the Zoo/ Leipzig, et al.
- **in addition:** winner of a studio price from the Berlin Government of Culture

Finalist of the "Creole World music" competition, Berlin and World Jazz-Award „Ella 2006", Berlin

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The musicians

Mayelis Guyat (lead voc, comp) – A small "Guantanamera" sat in front of the radio and sang along with all the songs; she dreamed of appearing onstage herself. Her mother insisted on a university degree in English. In 1995 Mayelis turned her dream into a reality when she toured with a band through Cuba and appeared with renowned salseros in the longest son in the world (Guinness). In her chosen city of Havana she became the front singer for the well-known *Cotó y su Eco del Caribe* in 2000. Later Mayelis enjoyed great success in Berlin's halls singing with *Musical Paradise Road*. Today a resident of Berlin, she follows in the footsteps of her role models Celia Cruz, Isaac Delgado, Gilberto Santa Rosa - and like them, she infects audiences with this mix of zest for living and joy. Her university diploma is hanging on the wall in Guantánamo.



Jotham Bleiberg (tp, comp, voc), was only five years old, when he started to play the trumpet. In 2000 he received his High School Diploma at the School of the Arts in San Francisco/USA. Then, with a scholarship, he studied classical trumpet at the San Francisco State University. During his studies, he made first experiences in Latin-American music playing with local salsa-bands. After living four years in the USA, he finished his classical studies at the University of Arts in Berlin in 2005. Since 2002, Jotham Bleiberg studies at the Jazz Institute Berlin and receives lessons from Gerard Presencer, Jiggs Wigham, and others. Jotham teaches trumpet at the Schlot Musikschule in Berlin. Current projects: *Mi Solar*, La Mula, Orquesta Caché, BTO, Blackmail-Berlin, Kompass Big Band.

Linnett Carrillo (p), our "Cubanita", born in Havana in 1980, has been a band member since October, 2005. At the age of 7, L. began an 8-year program in classical piano studies at the A. G. Caturia Music School. Later, she completed her degree in orchestra, solo, piano accompaniment and pedagogy at the Amando Roldan School of Music. She has participated and won prizes in piano competitions for creativity and composition. In 2001 she was invited by the Berkley School of Music (USA). Linnett has worked with Duo Son Cubanos, Las Chicas des sol, Karina y su Chicale, Conjunto Folklorico J.J. and the musical Lady Salsa. She also teaches at music schools. In Europe she has performed in France, Italy and in Germany with Linie Neun in Darmstadt and in A-Trane, Quasimodo and Unique Music Lounge in Berlin.



Maike Scheel (b, comp). In the early 1990s she played in various pop and funk bands and was a co-founder of the women's funk band ZEST. Engagements in jazz and world music formations followed. During her study at the Hanns Eisler Academy of Music in Berlin and the Bass Collective/New York she discovered her enthusiasm for salsa music – even before the Buena Vista Social Club boom. In 2002 she appeared as a guest at the International Jazz Festival in Havana with the salsa band Clarissa y las Diablitas. She took advantage of her stay in Cuba to supplement her musical studies on-site. Back in Berlin, *Mi Solar* was formed, the project that is currently close to her heart and with which she is making her dream of playing her own compositions and arrangements a reality.

Gabriele Kostas (perc, congas), percussion, composition – Since completing her studies in philosophy, history and art history, Gabriele Kostas has worked as a freelance percussionist. As well as appearing with musicians from a wide variety of stylistic directions, she also presents solo percussion concerts. She collaborates with actors, dancers, visual artists and filmmakers. Her own compositions have been released on the CDs "Herzschlag" and "Stein Klang." In addition to her performing activity, she teaches or has taught as director at the Accademia Bergamo Musica in Italy, as lecturer at the State Music Academy in Berlin and the Study Group on School Music, as head of the percussion department at the School of Music in Berlin-Schöneberg, as workshop author for the magazine "drums & percussion," and as guest professor for sound installations at the University/Academy of Art in Kassel.



Philipp Bombste Kullen (dr, timb), born in Berlin in 1979, began to take percussion lessons with Tom Holm at the age of six. At twelve he was playing in school ensembles and shortly thereafter in rock bands. He acquired specialized knowledge of Latin-American percussion in Cuba, where he studied with various musicians and played Afro-Cuban percussion with the band La Tendencia. He studied congas with Jorge Delgado in New York and learned the combination of different instruments and rhythms – multipercussion - in Berlin with Daniel "Topo" Gioia. Philipp Kullen currently plays with *Mi Solar*, Keith Tynes, Ray Blue, Fanfara Kalashnikov, Malanga, Derya Takkali and Telmo Pires.

Miguel Lagos (perc, voc). Born in Berlin of Chilean heritage. At the age of 8 he started playing the drums, taking lessons from different teachers. At 19, he switched to Randy Black at the Drumfactory in Berlin. In the beginning of his musical career he focused on Rock- Pop- Samba- and Soul-music, which later extended to Speedpunk, Deathmetal, Reggae and Funk. Since 2004 he has been active in the latin scene where he moves like a fish in water. Independently minded, he plays a large variety of repertoire. He also performs as a background singer and Guiro player with *Mi Solar* and Malanga. He has worked with: Ricardo Moreno, La Mula, Chico Trujillo, Atztekanayas, Surifico, Enrico Perez, Proyecto Brutal.



Damian Blanco (voc), from Havanna, found his musical roots at the age of 5 in his grandmother's courtyard where he learned to sing and play the guitar. He likes to experiment with dance, voice and percussion. Most important is the musical freedom to explore is voice. In various styles like: Son, Cha Cha, Salsa, Timba, Mambo, Bolero and Hip Hop where he feels at home musically. Damian lives in Berlin since 2000 and performs frequently as a back-up singer in Latin bands such as: La Familia, Malanga, Ricardo Moreno & Latin Explosion, Sonido Tres and Adonis y Soneros de Hoy. He is a permanent member of *Mi Solar* and has performed as soloist at the 1st Festival del Bolero in February, 2006. When asked where in Berlin he finds his inspiration D. answers: "In the street, multi-cultural events, parties, jam sessions - like in grandma's courtyard."