

Salsa Latinos-Biography

“Salsa Latinos,” Kona’s only authentic salsa band, brings to the Kona Chocolate Festival a variety of popular Latin dance tunes: salsa from around the world, merengue, cha cha cha, and cumbia. Each band member has a diverse musical history giving “Salsa Latinos” more than 70 years combined professional experience.

LEADER, KEYBOARDIST, LUIS ALBERTO ZARTE, originally from Tepic Nayaritt Mexico, began his musical career at the age of fourteen playing in local Mexican bands. At sixteen, while attending Universidad de Mexico and the United States, with his last concert being here in Kailua-Kona in 1999.

Luis stayed on in Hawaii and in 2000, he began playing with Los Latinos on Maui, Oahu, as well as the Big Island at Hard Rock Café, Durty Jakes, Mauna Lani Resort, Four Seasons Hualalai, Charles in Hilo, and several private parties.

PERCUSSIONIST ON TIMBALES, RUBEN RUIZ, born in Caracas, Venezuela, began playing trumpet in the Spanish rock and roll band, Salsa Tropical. During these years, he also played back up for Luis Enrique and Jerri Rivera as well as several other bands. Ruben was always “on the go,” traveling back and forth from Caracas to Los Angeles to play with Sonora Carrusec and Chino Espinosa y los Duenos del Sol.

Soon after Ruben arrived in Hawaii, he was playing concerts with Poncho Man, Billi, Moe Moe’a, Paty, Fiji BET and many more. Ruben caught the eye of Manuel, Leader of Los Latinos, and joined their ensemble playing

all over the Hawaiian Islands. With twenty-one years of musical experience, Ruben has been a strong contributor to our local salsa scene.

CONGAS, VOCALS, PERCUSSION, RANI MOORE *was raised in Philadelphia in a large family steeped in music. She is a singer and has had vocal training since age 9, and years of choral performance.*

She has also studied congas with players in Portland, OR, as well as taking part in workshops with Olat unji and Obo Adi. Drums and vocals came together in "Moment's Notice" a band where she was lead singer and played congas with that popular Big Island band for eight years.

She opened for Jonny Land in 2001, and toured with Jesse Collin Young doing back up vocals and congas. She was with him for the finale for the Blues mele on Kauai in 2001. She recently joined the Salsa Latino's and is enjoying playing authentic Salsa music, and singing in Spanish.

PERCUSSIONIST ON CONGAS, ORLANDO RODRIGUEZ, *born in Puerto Rico to a musical family, moved at age two to Brooklyn, New York. At the young age of thirteen, hanging out with his brother's band, Sociedad 76 as the band boy, he filled in on percussion when their regular percussionist hadn't shown up. For the next three years, Orlando was the percussionist for Sociedad 76, playing in major New York venues such as Madison Square Garden, Carnegie Hall, and the Lincoln Center.*

After several years in Southern California playing with Reggae bands, he continued west to Hawaii. Walking along Alii Drive one night, hearing that Latin beat coming from the Hard Rock Cafe however, he just

had to sit in on Congas. Continuing to be at the right place at the right time, he not only played Congas, Tímboles, Bongos, and sang backup for Los Latinos, he also played with some of our other local bands such as Poncho Man and Moe Moe'a.

JULIO MORALES. *from Ponce Puerto Rico, has been playing Salsa for 20 years as a background vocalist and percussionist with Orquesta Sensación in Germany and Pupi Santiago in Puerto Rico.*