

Gito Peña AND HIS ORCHESTRA PANAMERICANA

Hôtel San Juan Intercontinental

a Night
AT THE
Tropicoro

COOK
vector
STEREO

COOK



The Program

Side A:

- TEA FOR TWO** — the all-time favorite, transformed into a crazy, mixed up mambo.
- QUIEN SABE? (Who Knows)** — an appealing new bolero with a twist, sung by Juan Luis.
- TANGO** — The title is justified by a few Old World turns of phrase, but a cha cha cha by any other name is still a cha cha cha, especially when wielded by the Pena crew.
- ECHO LEGEND** — a brand new samba by the orchestra's talented arranger and assistant conductor, Hector Urdaneda.
- SEÑORITA FROM SAN JUAN** — a vigorously undulant cha cha cha on an inspiring subject, chanted by the composer, Oswaldo Seda.
- COQUI** — a hip-swinging merengue, in which Oswaldo Seda explains about Puerto Rico's unique singing tree-toads. Special attraction: the real life sound of the coquies themselves.

Side B:

- HOW HIGH THE MOON?** — the rich-harmonies favorite jumps as a hi-diddle-diddle guaracha.
- AFTER YOU (Fuiste tu)** — a sweet new Puerto Rican bolero in the sentimental tradition, crooned by Juan Luis.
- YO VIVO ENAMORADO (I live in Love)** — a spectacularly upbeat cha cha cha with one of the briefest lyrics on record, intoned by the Pena choral society.
- TEENAGER** — coming events cast their shadows before, and this half-merengue, half rock-and-roll tune makes a prediction.
- LOVE FOR SALE** — an instrumental impression of this old beauty, played in a heady mixture of bolero and beguine rhythms.
- SIERRA MORENA** — a favorite *paso doble*, a dance that continues to be the rage in Spain and Mexico, where it smacks of the bull ring. Norte Americanos will note that even a march can really swing.

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A NIGHT AT THE TROPICORO

Hotel El San Juan Intercontinental, Puerto Rico

A BLAZING TRAIL THROUGH THE WILDS OF LATIN RHYTHM

with Lito Pena's Orquesta Panamericana

vocal solos by **JUAN LUIS • OSWALDO SEDA**

The Island

Soon after it became certain that "operation bootstrap" was to be a success, Puerto Rico launched itself on a huge tourist program. Word leaked out that the entire northern seacoast east of San Juan was slated to become one lush playground, punctuated by the fantastic shapes of modern resort hotels. Soon physical results were to be seen. During the 1958 season, the biggest boon to hospitality was the opening to El San Juan Intercontinental, in the Isla Verde suburb of San Juan, hard-by another recent architectural wonder, the International Airport.

The Club

A connoisseur of these matters spends his first moments ogling the architecture and the bodies of his co-visitors, draped about the pools and beaches. Then he proceeds to taste the rums and test the tables of the casino and finally makes his way into the night club where dancing is continuous and the show starts at a fashionably late hour. In El San Juan Intercontinental the club is called the Tropicoro which, to those skilled in this sub-species of linguistics, means "tropic gold." The name was a natural outgrowth of Max Borges, Jr.'s design with its complex ceiling of parabolic curves in gold with big windows of V- and inverted-V-shapes looking out on the palmy landscape. Both the Tropicoro and the casino are sheltered by this remarkable ceiling, and, during pianissimo moments in the club it is possible to hear the music of chips falling where they may in the gaming room across the hall. The shows, created in Puerto Rico by Milton Lehr, travel the extensive circuit of Intercontinental Hotels throughout the hemisphere.*

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INTERCONTINENTAL HOTELS

SAN JUAN INTERCONTINENTAL, San Juan, Puerto Rico	HOTEL TAMANACO, Caracas, Venezuela
EMBAJADOR INTERCONTINENTAL, Ciudad Trujillo, D.R.	HOTEL GRANDE, Belem, Para, Brasil
JARAGUA INTERCONTINENTAL, Ciudad Trujillo, D.R.	HOTEL CARRERA, Santiago, Chile
CURACAO INTERCONTINENTAL, Curacao, N.A.	HOTEL TEQUENDAMA, Bogota, Colombia
HOTEL NACIONAL DE CUBA, Havana, Cuba	EL PRADO INTERCONTINENTAL, Barranquilla, Colombia
VARADERO OASIS, Varadero Beach, Cuba	EL SALVADOR INTERCONTINENTAL, El Salvador, C.A.
REFORMA INTERCONTINENTAL, Mexico City, Mexico	
HOTEL VICTORIA PLAZA, Montevideo, Uruguay	
HOTEL DEL LAGO, Maracaibo, Venezuela	
	OPENING SOON:
	PHOENICIA INTERCONTINENTAL, Beirut, Lebanon

The Band

Nightclubs are no better than their music, and the music in the Tropicoro is the best in Puerto Rico—swung by Lito Pena's Orquesta Panamericana. Young señor Pena comes from one of the island's oldest musical families, and three of his four musician brothers play in the band on this record. The lineup consists of four trumpets (one doubling the alto-voiced flugelhorn) and four saxophones in addition to the augmented rhythm section (traps, conga and bongo drums plus an assortment of rattling and scratching instruments) demanded by complex Latin rhythms. It is the largest name band on the island.

It should be noted that no Puerto Rican dance band uses trombones—whether because few Puerto Ricans want to learn the instrument or because those who do emigrate to the States to join the ranks of famous Latin bands there. Lito Pena makes up for the missing low notes by using a baritone saxophone (played by one of his brothers) whose gutty tones give added punch to the arrangements. Lito himself plays alto saxophone in the plaintive style dear to modern jazzmen, but with distinct Latin mannerisms. Fans will note that the Pena sound counterpoints a swinging, driving rhythm with a chaste-sounding melody and harmony which results from sparing use of vibrato. It is a richly appealing effect in the great tradition of Jimmie Lunceford & Co., and we predict it will take the Orquesta Panamericana a long step to fame.

Recorded and annotated by Carter Harman