

PRESS RELEASE -

Ernesto Lechner -  
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## JAVIER CABANILLAS BIOGRAPHY

Photo by Ben Torres

When **Javier Cabanillas** was a six year-old boy growing up in a little ranch in **Sonora, Mexico**, he would set up pots and pans in the yard, play the beat of **"We Are The World"** and pretend he was at a big stadium, performing '80s mega-hits in front of an enraptured audience.

The enraptured audience portion of his childhood dream has certainly come true. Since moving to **San Francisco** in 2011, Cabanillas has become one of the key conga players and bandleaders in the landscape of the **Bay area's Afro-Caribbean music**.

"One day I sold a bunch of my stuff, packed up the car with my congas and came to San Francisco armed with no musical connections," he says with a laugh. "A friend of mine had an auto body shop in the area and put me in touch with a salsa orchestra he had hired for a party. Fortunately, this led to an opportunity to jam with them. After that fateful night, I never stopped playing."

Soon, Cabanillas was hired for a steady Monday night gig with the prestigious **Pacific Mambo Orchestra**. He ended up touring the U.S. with the band and recording a **GRAMMY winning album in 2014**.

As time went by, he decided to develop as a composer and express his own musical ideas - influenced by traditional jazz, classic salsa and contemporary Cuban music - through his own project. An eight-piece band featuring singers and virtuoso instrumentalists, the **Cabanijazz Project** released its critically acclaimed debut album in 2018. Titled **Infrasonic**, it was



featured on **NPR** and **PBS** radio, also highlighted in digital playlists by DJs from all over the world.

Before moving to the U.S., Cabanillas spent **12 years crossing the border on a daily basis**, living in **Tijuana** while working as a music teacher in schools around **San Diego**.

"My experience teaching percussion to people of all ages taught me about patience and discipline," he reflects. "All those lessons served me well, as I learned about the music business and built lasting relationships with many performers. When people meet me, they can see right away that I'm incredibly passionate about making music."

### ERNESTO LECHNER--

Ernesto Lechner is a regular contributor to the Chicago Tribune and the Los Angeles Times. His writings on music have appeared in such publications as **Billboard**, **Interview**, **People** en español, **Rolling Stone**, and **Vibe**.



Album Artwork by Michael V. Rios  
Creator of **Carlos Santana's SUPERNATURAL**