



OUR PURPOSE – More Than Just A Festival...

THE INTRODUCTION OF LATIN ELEMENTS INTO JAZZ began almost with the genesis of jazz and is largely due to the mixing of various cultures in New Orleans.

A dominant presence in the spread of Latin jazz was the trumpeter and arranger Mario Bauza, who introduced many elements of Cuban origin from his native Havana, first in Chick Webb's big band (*in the Mario Bauza decade of the '30s*) and later in Fletcher's bands, Henderson and Cab Calloway.



The most recent renaissance of Latin jazz was sparked by the influx of many Latin musicians (*some exiled from Fidel Castro's Cuba*) looking for greater opportunities in New York and Florida. There is also a sense that the often intense, but always danceable, polyrhythmic quality of the music has created a wider audience for jazz in general.

One of the latest contributors to Latin Jazz was the late great Tito Puente, “Rey de los Timbales” of Puerto Rico. In his lifetime he was a pop culture celebrity and brought Latin Jazz with genres like Mambo & Cha-cha-cha to the masses. ***His most famous composition is “Oye Como Va”, made famous by Mexican guitarist, Carlos Santana.***



Another well known legend in Latin Jazz is Pianist Eddie Palmieri, who still resides in New York. He helped make the piano montuno (a repeating piano ostinato based on a clave pattern) an essential part of Latin Jazz. His signature sound involves “quartal harmony,” which means stacking intervals of fourths to create chords with a suspended, modal character. Eddie is a San Antonio favorite!

Our Vision and Mission...

The mission of the **STARLITE ORGANIZATION FOR THE ARTS (SOFTA)** is to nurture and maintain the cultural integrity and historical value of our Afro European-Caribbean & Latin heritage through educational presentations of music, dance and performing arts.



SOFTA’s principal goal is to ensure that everyone, regardless of age, in the state of Texas and elsewhere, has the unique and undeniable opportunity to be exposed to all elements of our cultural heritage, whether it may be through music, dance, or performing arts.