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Alex Torres & His Latin Orchestra

Formed in Amsterdam, New York, in October 1980, this 12-piece orchestra is led by the Bronx-born bassist Alex Torres. They have been presented by hundreds of festivals, performing arts centers, and events annually to perform their original blend of Afro-Caribbean rhythms, such as *salsa*, *merengue*, *cha-cha*, *bomba*, *plena*, and Latin Jazz.

The Orchestra has been the recipient of numerous awards, including the New England Cultural Arts Preservation Award, the New York State Music Achievement Award, the Schenectady League of Arts Award, the Governor's Excellence in Arts Award, the NAACP Albany Chapter Award, and three awards from New York Capital District Original Music Awards in 2016.

Alex Torres & His Latin Orchestra have performed for President Bill and Hillary Clinton at the New York State Democratic Convention and also for New York Governor's George Pataki and Eliot Spitzer's inaugurations. They have shared the stage and billings with such major acts as Tito Puente, Tito Puente Jr., Eddie Palmieri, Andy Montañez, Los Hermanos Moreno, Arturo Sandoval, Branford Marsalis, the Count Basie and Woody Herman Orchestras, and others.

The group is also registered with the Arts-In-Education Program of New York State. This program brings the orchestra into schools to showcase cultural diversity and explain the music, instruments, and rhythms associated with their music.

Alex Torres & His Latin Orchestra also have been featured on television commercials for *The Albany Times Union*. They wrote and performed the music for the PBS weekly program *Made in New York*, and twice performed for Time Warner's music series, *Sounding Board*. Their music has also been featured in the motion pictures *Slammin' Salmon*, *Old Dogs*, *Drunken Wedding*, and *Broken City*; indie films *The Disappearance of Eleanor Rigby*, *Guten Tag Ramon*, and *Permission*; and the made-for-TV movie *Unanswered Prayers*. Also, they have been featured on TV series *Ugly Betty*, *Human Target*, *The Finder*, *Miami's The Color Splash*, *Road to the Kentucky Derby*, *Quiero Mis Quinceas*, *Mistresses*, *Breaking Amish*, *The Blacklist*, *Code Black*, and *Complications*; and Australian TV series *Tricky Business* and *The Glades*; as well as Verizon's web series *Grown*, and featured sound tracks on the video games *Tropico 3*, *4* & *5*.

Orchestra members are: **Alex Torres** – Band leader, bass, vocals; **Abe Sanchez** – Piano; **Robert Lopez** – Tres, vocals; **Wilo Rodriguez** – Lead vocalist; **Todd Fabozzi** – Congas; **Angel Dueño** – Timbales, guira, vocals; **Miguel Santiago** – Bongo; **Jon Bronk** – Lead trumpet; **Terry Gordon** – Trumpet; **Fred Young** – Trumpet; **Nate Giroux** – Saxophones; and **Ken Olsen** – Trombone.

The band members hail from different areas of the region and are of different ethnicities:

Abe Sanchez is from Venezuela and currently resides in North Adams, MA. William Rodriguez is from Santiago de Cuba and currently resides in Brattleboro, VT. Alex, Robert, Angel, and Miguel are Puerto Rican and have roots in Amsterdam, NY, and Todd was born and raised in Amsterdam and currently resides in Saratoga. Alex, Todd, and Robert attended Amsterdam High School together. Ken, Fred, and Nate are Albany residents, while Jon is from Gloversville, NY, and Terry is from Sharon Springs, NY. Many of the musicians are Capital District jazz players, and this has helped spread the word among them about Alex's band. Some have stopped by to "check it out" and have stayed for over 20 years!

The band is currently in their 37th year of performing, and there are no signs of them slowing down. They are also currently recording their 13th CD *Guarapo y Mermelada*, which is due to be released in the summer of 2018.

For additional information and a complete schedule of performance dates, please visit the band's web site (dates are added every month): <http://www.alextorres.com>. ▼

Alex Torres and His Latin Orchestra CDs and T-shirts are available in the New York Folklore Society's Gallery, 129 Jay Street, Schenectady and online at www.nyfolklore.org/gallery/store/music.html



Alex Torres and His Latin Orchestra. Back row, left to right: Bobby Falcon, Angel Dueño, Todd Fabozzi, Jon Bronk, Terry Gordon, Fred Young, Miguel Santiago, Eric Ciarmello, Abe Sánchez. Front row, left to right: Ken Olsen, Alex Torres, Robert Lopez. Photo by Bill Ziskin.

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