

L A T I N

REVIEWS By Héctor Reséndez



■ **MARK BARNETT:** *Beautiful* (MP, 6171) Producer: Juan González Pereda. POP.

This is the debut album for a 17-year old singer from Tijuana, Mexico named Mark Barnett. The quality of his first album certainly points out that Barnett has ample singing talent. The same assumption, however, can't be made about the actual material on the album. With alternating themes, such as soft rock to disco to ballads, the album's purpose appears rather disjointed. If he had done all ballads, Barnett would've hit his mark (no pun

intended) on the nose. The ballads are delicious and well executed. A good first effort, otherwise, by a very talented vocalist.

■ **CHARLY GARCIA:** *Unplugged* (SDI, 81677) Producer: Alejandro Pels. POP/ROCK.

Recorded live on the MTV Latino show, the Argentinian pop-rock idol's thought-provoking lyrics explode on this acoustic retro-presentation of Charly Garcia's greatest hits. Garcia lets his hair down for a most definite funky interpretation of his highly popular material. The accomplished pianist and singer recorded this album last May. Though North American rockers will find it rather tame, it's as unplugged as South American pop-rock gets.



■ **SEGURO SOCIAL:** *Un Beso y Una Flor* (WEA Latina, 12150) Producers: K.C. Porte, Vicente Sabater, & Joe Dwoniak. POP-ROCK.

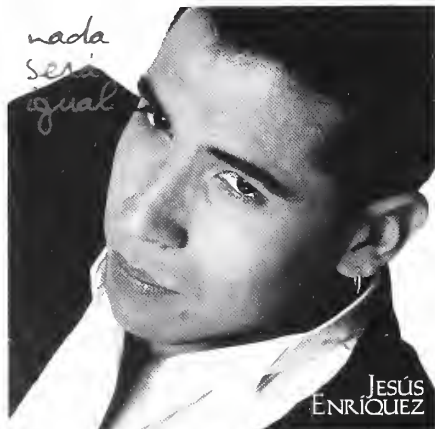
Hard-ringing rock interlaced with pop rhythms, Seguro Social is definitely no contradiction in terms. It's swinging rock en español at its unadulterated best. Additionally, there's a combo of reggae and tropical rhythms as well as a few pop-tinged excuses for having a good time. The title theme, "Un Beso y Una Flor," highlights lead singer, José

Manuel Casañ, who has an innate ability to create a mosaic of moods with his group's music. The internationally popular group, founded in 1982 by Casañ, has toured from New York to Paris to Havana and to Los Angeles.

PICK OF THE WEEK

■ **JESUS ENRIQUEZ:** *Nada Será Igual* (RMM, 82008) Producer: Mike Rivera. TROPICAL-SALSA.

This is singer, Jesús Enriquez', second tropical-salsa album for the RMM label. Featured are compositions by noted Latin American authors as Lolita de la Colina, Richard Vizuette, Guadalupe García García, and Ricardo Montaner. The young Mexican salsero who first appeared in 1994, has an amazing, dynamic voice. His first single, "Me Va Extrañar," is living proof of this singer's ability to render another commercial hit. The entire album, *Nada Será Igual*, should easily supercede any expectations for success. With a version of the Boyz II Men single, "Al Final Del Camino (The End of the Road)," the classic "Que Te Vaya Bonito," to hit-bound singles like "Como Fiera Como Dama" and "A Que Te Sabe La Noche Sin Mi," how can you miss?



THE LATIN LOWDOWN

News From U.S. & Latin America

By Hector Reséndez

TIMBALE ROLL PLEASE: The Latin top vote-getters for the 38th Annual Grammy Awards ran on the conservative side this year. So says correspondent **Enrique Lopetegui** in a *Los Angeles Times* article last Thursday. The esteemed critic pondered as to whether **Gloria Estefan's** album *Abriendo Puertas* should've won in the Tropical Latin performance category. This work is not as impressive as was Estefan's *Mi Tierra* wrote Lopetegui. True, but nevertheless, the latter was an incredibly huge and successful seller. If things had been different, as they were for **Alanis Morissette**, Salsa singer **Mark Anthony**, would've won hands down for his *Todo A Su Tiempo*.

Estefan's long-time friend **Jon Secada** took the award for the Latin Pop category. One would have to agree with Lopetegui's comment that the only true contender was the group **Maná** and their *Cuando Los Angeles Lloran* album. Knowing Lopetegui's deep affection for rock, his comment on how "pop-rockers" will have to continue their vigil for public acknowledgement rings true. Romanticism is alive and thriving in the Latin music industry.

Juan Gabriel fans worldwide were shockingly dismayed when their idol did not capture his Grammy in the Mexican-American category. Instead, it went, deservedly so, to **Flaco Jiménez**. This was the veteran Tex-Mex artist's second award. He won another one in 1990 with the **Texas Tornados**. Finally, the Latin Jazz Performance category winner was the late **Antonio Carlos Jobim** for his excellent *Antonio Brasileiro* album. Was this, however, another case of honoring the career rather than an individual production or effort. The other contenders in this field were certainly not surprised.

SWITCHING GEARS IN MID-STREAM? Merengue queen, **Olga Tañón**, recently announced her plans to release a romantic ballads album to be named *Nuevos Senderos* (New Paths). Tañón explains her reasons for taking this road as a return to her original roots. Before becoming a sensation in the merengue world, she was a ballads singer. More importantly was Tañón's desire to collaborate with the legendary Mexican composer-singer **Marco Antonio Solís**. With an album's worth of exceptional songs that were surely hand-picked for her, no wonder Tañón could not refuse the tantalizing offer from Solís.

"From an interpretation point of view, Olga has been a great surprise for me," commented Solís. "She surprised me in the studio. I have always heard her sing merengues. Yet, I was impressed by her singing (these) ballads and the strong songs that are contained in this album."



Olga Tañón.



Toño Rosario and son Antonio receiving Gold album on Nov. 21 last year at SOB's for his latest album *Quiero Volver A Empezar*.

WEA LATINA ARTISTS TO BE HONORED AT ACE AWARDS: The 28th Premios ACE (ACE Awards) will be held at the **Marriott Marquis** in New York City on March 23rd. The ceremonial event honors Latin American artists who have had major achievements in the United States.

In the music category, **WEA Latina** has numerous artists who have been nominated. In the Extraordinary Individual of the Year (Figura Extraordinaria del Año) category, **Luis Miguel** received the nod; **Maná** accepted a nomination as Latin Rock Group for *Cuando Los Angeles Lloran*; **Olga Tañón's** performance at SOB's is nominated for Best Female Performance at a Nightclub (she has also been nominated for Album of the Year); Dominican merengue artist, **Toño Rosario**, gets two nominations: for Best Visiting Orchestra and Best Regional Antillian Interpreter (The Cuban group, **Vocal Sampling** also were nominated in the latter category); and, **Laura Pausini** was nominated for the Female Revelation of the Year. Kudos to WEA Latina and their artists!