

Silencio (Silence)

Written by bluelover
Saturday, 01 August 2015 21:49 -

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One of the most moving and touching 'boleros' ever, "**Silencio**" was composed by Puerto Rico's Rafael Hernandez, a major figure of Latin American music. The rendition features Ibrahim Ferrer and Omara Portuondo in a soulful duet Wim Wenders filmed the recording session in Havana as well as the performance of the song in Amsterdam.



Ibrahim Ferrer & Omara Portuondo sing 'Silencio'

The scene from the film in which the song is performed is particularly poignant because the age of the performers (he was 72 and she almost 70; the oldest bandmember was 91 and several were over 80 years old) is contrasted by the freshness and emotional intensity of the performance, in which she is moved to tears that he tenderly brushes away.

Silencio

Rafael Hernandez is considered one of the greatest Puerto Rican music composers. He was born in the town of Aguadilla in 1892 and died in San Juan in 1965. Rafael studied music in

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Puerto Rico and Mexico. He also served in the armed forces during the first world war. In 1926 while residing in New York city he formed the musical trio called "Trío Borinquen". In 1929 he composed the famous "Lamento Borincano". In 1934 he formed the musical group called "Cuarteto Victoria". Rafael traveled much of Latin America with both musical groups. In 1937 he wrote one of his most beautiful songs "Preciosa".



Rafael Hernandez

In 1947 Rafael returned to Puerto Rico and he became director of the Puerto Rican Symphonic Orquesta and also advisor to WIPR-Radio . Some of his most famous and beautiful compositions are: Ahora somos Felices, Campanitas de Cristal, Capullito de Alelí, Culpable, El Cumbanchero, Ese soy Yo, Perfume de Gardenias, Tu no Comprendes and, of course Silencio.



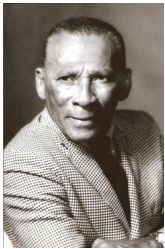
Trio Borinquen

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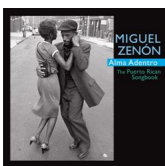
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Rafael Hernandez composed Christmas music, Zarzuelas, Danzas, Congas, Guarachas, Rumbas, Boleros, Romanzas, Operetas, Plenas, Valses and much more. Much of his music has reached world fame. The music of Rafael Hernandez forms an important part of Puerto Rican Culture. His songs and tunes bring beautiful nostalgic memories to most Puerto Ricans on the island, and those whose reside in the USA and elsewhere.



Rafael Hernandez

The alto saxophonist **Miguel Zenón** is identifiable by his tone, which is floaty and bright and ornate. But he's also become identifiable by the quality of ideas, his particular kind of intellectual ambition. "Alma Adentro: The Puerto Rican Songbook" is the third record he's made that analyzes Puerto Rican music from the ground up and connects it, with great originality, to new jazz practice. He's onto pop standards from the 1920s to the '70s: mostly the boleros, ballads and filin-style music that might represent the Puerto Rican equivalent of Gershwin and Kern songs.



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Miguel Zenón - Alma Adentro, album

On the Rafael Hernandez composition "Silencio," the saxophonist starts off with a repeated phrase before turning to an initial melody, itself only an introduction to a roaming and improvisational discussion by Zenon and Perdomo (band pianist) that eventually returns to the repeated hook.



Miguel Zenón

Miguel Zenón: *"Rafael Hernández is perhaps the most internationally relevant Puerto Rican in history. His accomplishments are almost too many to mention: he was part of James Reese Europe's 'Hell Fighters', lived in Puerto Rico, Mexico and Cuba, where he's considered a national treasure. He was an incredibly prolific and versatile composer, who wrote some of the most legendary songs in the history of Latin American music. A musical giant, in every sense of the word."*

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Rafael Hernandez