

Biographical Sketch of

Ray GONZÁLEZ

Ray González is a musician dedicated in mind, body and soul to the creation of salsa and Latin jazz. A re-known musician and Latin music pioneer in Connecticut, Ray González was born in Gurabo, Puerto Rico. He attended the Conservatory of Music and the University of Puerto Rico. He also studied under the tutelage of Master Trumpeter Carmine Caruzo, in New York City. González has over 35 years of experience in the performing arts as a professional musician, arranger, composer and conductor. As a musician, the Caribbean, South America and the United States have been his laboratory of experience. González has played and recorded with international musicians such as Tito Puente, Charlie Palmieri, Kako, Giovanni Hidalgo, Charlie Sepúlveda, Ismael Rivera, Ray de La Paz, the Puerto Rican Power Orchestra and many others. In November 2006, González presented his latest Salsa CD production “Yo tengo lo que te gusta”. The production was warmly received by the public, the music critics and was pre-nominated for a Latin Grammy.

Over the years González has held the position of Music Director at numerous institutions including the University of Turabo, the “Hartford Arts Festival” and the “International Latin American Voice and Song Festival”. González is the Music Director of Guakía, Inc. and founder of Guakibomjazz, a Latin jazz youth orchestra. Through the years, González has been commissioned to compose music for the Hartford Symphony Orchestra and the New Haven Symphony Orchestra. Among his most celebrated compositions for the Hartford Symphony Orchestra is: “Symphonic Salsa” 1991 and “Pa’ Vieques” 2003. González has also performed in collaboration with the symphonies for many projects such as *Music of the Americas*, *Serenata Latina*, *Fiesta Latina* and others.

Ray González has received special honors, awards and recognitions by many political institutions and community entities: Connecticut’s former Governor William O’Neill, Southern CT State University, The Hispanic Health Council, the María Sánchez Award, University of CT, the Hispanic Professional Network, and Mi Casa, among others. Hartford City Mayor Eddie Pérez and the Court of Common Council proclaimed May 2, 2004 and as Ray González’s Day in the City of Hartford. The Connecticut State Senate and the House of Representatives also issued an official citation in recognition of González for his contribution to Latin Music and his dedication to youth education.

In 2007, Guakía, Inc. created The Ray González Latin Jazz and Salsa Festival, an annual event to honor the pioneering work of Ray González in CT as a professional musician in Latin Jazz and Salsa and as an educator of the Latino youth for over 35 years. Hartford’s Mayor Eddie Pérez, officiated the ribbon cutting ceremony and proclaimed August 9, 2007 as The Ray González Latin Jazz and Salsa Festival day in Hartford, CT. The festival’s mission is to heal with music the soul of the community and nourish it’s yearning for music of excellence. The festival features some of the most talented international artist in Latin Jazz and Salsa, such as: Luis Marín, Paoli Mejías, Jerry Medina, Charlie Sepúlveda, Miguel “Meñique” Barcasnegras, Edwin Clemente, PuertoSax, Cándido Reyes and Güiro Jazz, among many.