

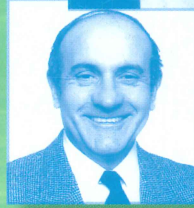
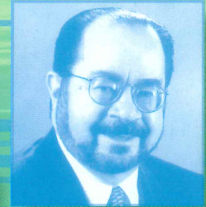


LATIN LONG ISLAND

YOUR LINK TO TODAY'S LOCAL CONTEMPORARY HISPANIC COMMUNITY

Anniversary Edition

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Non-Profit
Leaders —
Those that
do the Work



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TROPICAL ARTIST
GEORGE LAMOND
 LAUNCHES INTO CYBERSPACE

Recently, I had the opportunity to sit down with up-and-coming salsa artist, George Lamond at Starmedia.com's Fifth Avenue studios in New York. The air was full of excitement as George prepared to make his very first live videochat appearance on "Traéme la Música!" via the World Wide Web, sponsored by Starmedia.com.

Starmedia.com, formed in 1996, is one of the first dot com companies to answer the call of the Internet's over 18 million Spanish and Portuguese-speaking users, worldwide. The website offers its users E-mail service, entertainment news, and live concerts transmitted via the Internet, featuring the likes of Christina Aguilera and Santana. Starmedia.com is also helping to usher in the age of the "videochat" through its program "Traéme la Música!" This weekly showcase allows on-line users the opportunity to interact with a variety of musical artists in one-hour, live chat sessions. They are handled much like television interviews (with multiple cameras and a large technical team), and can even be conducted from various locations.

For example, "Traéme la Música!" recently hosted a remote chat with Luis Enrique, live from Gloria Estefan's Miami restaurant. George Lamond is the latest Latin star to test the power of the Internet as a guest on the program, following in the footsteps of Carlos Santana, La India, and Ana María Orozco of "Betty La Fea" fame.

Many people in their late twenties will remember Lamond from the freestyle music scene of the early nineties, in which he had his biggest hit, "Bad of the Heart." He also toured as an opening act for New Kids on the Block. His success at an early age, however, did not spoil George. This easygoing Puerto Rican boy from The Bronx proved,

With eyes that really twinkle, a charm all his own, and a glistening smile..... this man is surely destined for stardom.



Photo courtesy of Ana Pines

in my interview with him, that he is as normal as you and I. He still has fond memories of his days at Christ the King school, where he played basketball and took on the role of "Joseph" in the school Christmas play.

Well, he's come a long way from his roots in New York, though on occasion he still sings freestyle on the club circuit throughout the northeast. In a Valentine's Day appearance at Macy's Herald Square, George entertained fans with something old, something new and something borrowed, including his newest hit "Juraré Quererte," his own version of "Que Te Vas," and a bit of freestyle. In February, Lamond also played to a packed house at Madison Square Garden for the annual "Concierto del Amor," satisfying the

growing demand for live performances. Showing amazing range and versatility, George proved that he has a voice, presence, and style all his own.

With an incredible head for music and musical styles, George Lamond is 100% artist, and it shows in everything that he does, onstage and beyond the footlights. This once former culinary student is an amazing cook, and proves it whenever he can. Whether it's preparing traditional Puerto Rican fare or a gourmet meal, like his music, he flavors it just right.

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Though the echoes of his freestyle days still can be heard in the New York club scene, George Lamond is on the rise to new career heights with the recent release of his new album, "GL," his sophomore endeavor into salsa music. Since its debut this year, both coasts are abuzz with his name. Nationwide, the big music retailers are promoting the album (available on Sony Music and on Amazon.com) with larger than life pictures of George, signaling that he is back and with even more gusto.

"GL" combines salsa and boleros, incorporating elements of pop, reggae, r & b, as well as Colombian-style music. Lamond's name may be unfamiliar to today's younger popular music audiences, but the fans that George has acquired in his almost decade long career have never forgotten him. Die-hard Lamond fans are going to love his latest offering, and he is bound to make believers out of those younger listeners as well. This was evident by the on-line response that he received during his videochat.

Elated by the fact that the chat was conducted with cameras, since he's a singer and not a typist, George entered the studio with great enthusiasm. "I'm very comfortable," Lamond announced to a fan, who asked him about his feelings on chatting live with thousands of people on-line. "It's the first time that I am speaking with people from all

In a music world that tries to strip artists of their identities for the sake of a dollar, this gem of an artist proudly retains his cultural luster and reminds us all from whence we came and where we are going.

over...wow!" George Lamond is a man who is equally at ease in front of the camera as he is with a microphone in his hand. With eyes that really twinkle, a charm all his own, and a glistening smile that would put The Osmonds to shame, this man is surely destined for stardom.

In the hour-long session with an in-house moderator, Lamond fielded questions from fans in nine countries including Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Colombia, Mexico, and Venezuela, among others. Most of the questions were music related, specifically about the new album, "GL." One young Colombian woman, clearly smitten with



Photo courtesy of Ana Pines

the salsa singer, asked, "What type of women do you like?" George pointed out that he preferred them well dressed, sexy and "serious, romantic and private." Showing that he holds a special place in his heart for his fans, he dedicated and sang one of the beautiful ballads from his new album for her.

Lamond considers learning to sing salsa and the completion of this second album, which he says is more aggressive than the last, as his greatest accomplishments. George has found singing salsa not only to be beneficial in terms of identifying himself as a Latin artist, but it has been a continuous growth process that has helped him develop his own unique sound. The sound of "GL" is one that he hopes people will recognize and appreciate for years to come. As he

learns more about Latin musical styles and incorporates them further into his music, Lamond is certain that when the time comes, his third Spanish album "will be even better."

I asked George if a new English album is on the way. "The reception of the first album (*Entrega*) was so great," he said, "that I couldn't let them [the fans] down." He and his producer began work on an album in English last year, but put that on hold while they made "GL." "I'm glad we did," Lamond said. So, what is on the horizon for George Lamond? We can definitely expect a new pop album in English very soon, along with more music in Spanish. The "salsero" even hinted that he might just like to try his hand at acting, though he admits that would come later down the road.

It is clear to me, and to all those adoring "GL" fans, that George Lamond is both humble and exceptionally talented. In a music world that tries to strip artists of their identities for the sake of a dollar, this gem of an artist proudly retains his cultural luster and reminds us all from whence we came and where we are going. ■

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Photos courtesy of Ana Pines