



## HÉCTOR “TITO” MATOS

Born and raised in San Juan, Puerto Rico on June 15, 1968. Since his childhood Tito learned to play **plena** thanks to a pandereta given to him as a Three Kings day gift by his grandfather Felipe. Even though Tito knows the rhythmic rudiments of Plena and Bomba, it is in the **requinto**, hand-held drum that improvises, where Tito found recognition as one of the best requinto players of his generation.

His professional career starts at a young age with **Los Sapos del Caño**, a group of pleneros with a revolutionary edge directed by Juan “Llonsi” Martínez. At the same time, Tito became a member of **Los Pleneros del Almendro**, and bomba group **Agüeybana**. Tito was also a member of **Los Pleneros del Coquí**, and **Los Pleneros del Pueblo**, one of the most explosive and experimental percussive ensembles ever.

Later on he became a **requinto** player for the legendary group, **Los Pleneros de la 23 Abajo**, a logical step for this plenero in his maturity process. With Roberto Cipreni and his Pleneros de la 23 Abajo, Tito travels to the 1992 World Expo in Seville, Spain. With his **requinto** on hand, Tito has had the opportunity to perform with artists such as **Franco de Vita**, **Ricky Martin**, **Pandora**, and **Lucecita Benítez** just to mention a few.

In 1994, Tito moves to New York City to finish his college degree. He becomes a member of **Los Pleneros de la 21**, recorded in their CD “Somos Boricuas”, and traveled all over the United States, Canada, Mexico, Europe, Cuba, and Australia.

In 1997, Tito creates **Viento de Agua**, a group in which he works as a singer, percussionist, composer and director. The creative work that Viento de Agua recorded in its first CD “De Puerto Rico al Mundo” gave Tito and his group instant recognition as one of the Top Ten recordings of 1998 in the **Peter Watrous’s** New York Times column as well as a **2000 Sunshine Award** for best Tropical Album.

While in NYC, he also performed as a guest artist in **Eddie Palmieri's** "El Rumbero del Piano", in **David Sánchez's** "Obsesión" and "Melaza" productions, and in "Para todos Ustedes" the latest album of **Los Pleneros de la 21**, all **Grammy Award** Nominees. Tito also recorded in **William Cepeda's** "My Roots and Beyond" and "Afroboricua" as well as in **Ralph Irizarry's** "Timbalaye" CD's Best Kept Secret. His work in **Miguel Zenón's** albums "Ceremonial" and "Esta Plena" was again recognized with Grammy nominations. He also performed at **Ricky Martin's** first ever TV Special and at the **Gloria Estefan** and **Celine Dion** at Radio City Music Hall Special. Moreover, Tito was featured in Popular Bank's TV Specials "Raíces" and "**Sonó-Sonó**"

While in New York, he was also signed by **Lp**, Latin Percussion, as the first plenero in the company artist's catalog. During his career, Tito has performed in concerts and festivals in Cuba, Venezuela, Canada, Spain, Germany, Austria, Ecuador, Colombia, Italy, Mexico, France, Australia, Thailand, United States, Peru, and Puerto Rico among others. Moreover, Tito reunited veteran practitioners of Bomba and Plena to create **Viento de Agua Unplugged**, the all-percussive version of the group. The concept receives instant recognition and great reviews, proof of that is the recording of its first album "**Materia Prima**" produced by prestigious **Smithsonian Institute's** label, **Folkways Recordings**.

After 10 years in NYC, Tito returns to his Santurce with a BA in Landscape Architecture and a huge collection of **panderetas** (hand-held drums traditional of Plena). In 2005 Tito and fellow plenero Richard Martínez started Los Plenazos Callejeros, a street-corner improvised celebration of Plena in which pleneros from all over the island and different generations meet to keep alive the tradition for the only purpose of playing and having a good time. In May 2012 he produced **Los Plenazos Callejeros, the documentary**, in which they tell the story of over 70 plenazos over a seven year span. In 2009 Tito and Viento de Agua released their 3<sup>rd</sup> album entitled **Fruta Madura** and again got great reviews. In November of 2013 Viento de Agua just released their 4<sup>th</sup> album **Opus IV**, hoping to remain as forefront of the Bomba and Plena movement. The album received a nomination to the **Latin Grammy**.

Tito has dedicated his life to learn and teach Bomba & Plena giving lectures, demonstration and workshops all over the world; art that he polished with anthropologist Ramón López, PhD. David González and master percussionist Juan Gutiérrez de **Los Pleneros de la 21**. In addition, Tito is currently working on an archive of Plena songs with the final purpose of publishing a Plena songbook, all to help in the promotion, preservation, and dissemination of the genre that he loves, Plena.