

Amanda Martinz

Guajira Sola Makes Music Video History

Singer, composer and broadcaster Amanda Martinez takes Toronto's Latin-Jazz community to new heights with her first video release, *Guajira Sola* slated 9 June 2007.

Latin-Jazz music CD launches are one thing in Toronto, but a Latin-Jazz video launch is quite another and Amanda Martinez may be the first Toronto Latin-Jazz artist to release a music video!

Amanda barely contained her excitement as she snatched a few moments to share what went into its four magic minutes.

Guajira Sola is a story of a woman who decides to make a change in her life. Her lover had done her wrong and "I've learned your games!" Amanda stated. Woman re-born of herself and her confidence renewed. The story behind *Guajira Sola* is much more than a those few understated phrases. Music and stage and performance have been Amanda from her very first day.

As a girl growing up, Amanda's life was filled with Latin American songs on visits to Mexico and Cuba with her family. "It was there that my family saturated me with the music of Cuban trovadores like Pablo Milanés, Sylvio Rodríguez, and Latin American greats like Mercedes Sosa, Elis Regina and Chavela Vargas," she said. Her dad's record collection added more insight, material and rhythm. Studying the piano in the Conservatory to Grade 8 gave her mastery of the tools needed to play create music.

Amanda also performed in high school and so impressed her audience that she was approached and retained by an agent. During her second year at York University studying Biology, she did some shows for the dinner show Stage West all the while keeping her focus on school.

Four years of sales and marketing for four years after graduation wasn't satisfying and Amanda immersed herself in an MBA, specializing in Latin America. Music and acting gave way to spreadsheets and reports. But, her MBA took her to Venezuela and to the Canadian Consulate in Mexico where the pull of the music and its culture were becoming irresistible. The pieces were coming together. The music within Amanda's psyche was surging.

A short stint working as an Associate Director of Trade Finance brought her to a crossroad. "I realized this was not my destiny," she sighed.

Amanda quit the corporate world and committed herself to her music.

"Melodies were in my head and I wanted to challenge myself. I wanted to see what I could do as Amanda, and see what I could bring to the table," Amanda said.

Performing since 2001, she had already recorded her first CD *Sola* in 2005 when she got her first big concert. Jane Bunnett invited her to the Global Divas, St. Stephen's House fundraiser in March 2006. *Sola's* launch came barely three months later 22 June 2006.

With her CD *Sola*, Amanda said she was "trying to make the most of performing traditional songs from Latin America and [material and inspiration from] my father's record collection."

Collaboration is a thread that runs through Amanda's endeavours and on the Toronto produced *Train 48* where Amanda acted; she met the wardrobe designer Naomi Jaye, a nascent director and filmmaker. Naomi found about *Sola* through a mutual business school friend and was determined to direct a video with Amanda.

Naomi settled on *Sola's* signature song "*Guajira Sola*," taken with its fun, upbeat and strong tone.

Storyboarding is a mystery, but Naomi and Amanda, her musicians, the production crew invaded *Lula Lounge*, Toronto's legendary Latin-Jazz boîte à chansons and filmed the whole thing on one November 2006 day. Produced in December 2006, *Guajira Sola* got its first airtime in May 2007 on Bravo! Amanda's musical collaborators include the *Sola* musicians Kevin Laliberte - Guitar; George Koller - Bass; Alex Brown - Trumpet; Chendy Leon - Percussion; Osvaldo Rodriguez - Violin; Julio Ceasar Jimenez - Piano. Her musicians are a very important part of Amanda's creative well and her professional life. They are almost like a close family whose easy familiarity and confidence can communicate ideas and thoughts with a look or a nod, putting that magic into a piece.

In the video, Mexico's colours come to life through Mexican born visual artist Marina

Dempster. Originally Amanda wanted to use one of Marina's creations for her CD cover. But it didn't happen.

However for the video, Amanda showed director Naomi some of Marina's art and it became the thread in *Guajira Sola*. Marina created a piece of yarn art or Huichol that visualized the music's color and vibrancy and embraced the woman hero in a most interesting way.

Amanda Martinez and her music and *Guajira Sola* can be reached at www.amandamartinez.ca

