

Conjunto Jardín *expanding the borders of son jarocho*



- nominated for **Best Latin/Salsa Artist, 2003 L.A. Weekly Music Awards**
- recipient, **L.A. Treasures Award, City of Los Angeles Dept. of Cultural Affairs**

Updating and reinvigorating the lively son jarocho of Veracruz, Mexico, **Conjunto Jardín** (cone-HOON-toe har-DEEN) features sisters **Libby** and **Cindy Harding** – the band’s name is a play on the Spanish pronunciation of their last name – on the traditional jarana, a small strummed rhythm guitar, and requinto, a 4-string lead guitar plucked with a long bone pua or pick. Their sibling vocals ride atop hard-charging jaranas, driving cajón-and-bass rhythm section and sparkling harp-like keyboards to create a fresh, modern sound that is at once faithfully traditional yet possessed of a rock-influenced drive and accessible edge.

Integral members of the Los Angeles family of bands that includes Sabiá and Huayucaltía, Cindy and Libby have played jarocho music virtually all their lives, starting as children learning from and performing with their father, renowned Latin American scholar and harpist Tim Harding.

When not coaxing out of his sampling keyboard the sparkling arpeggios and syncopated melodic lines traditionally played on Veracruz harp, **Gary Johnson** may be found abusing the traditional Veracruz percussion instruments – the quijada, or donkey jawbone, and pandero, an octagonal tambourine. World music veteran **Rick Moors**’ electric bass often seems to bridge Mexican and African traditions, while Chiapas, Mexico native **Jorge Mijangos** sings and plays jarana, leona (baritone requinto) and tré cubano. Also a master luthier, Jorge has constructed many of the band’s instruments. Rounding out the lineup on cajón, the wooden box drum originated by black slaves in the Americas, is **Gino Gamboa** – just off a national tour with Peru Negro – whose specialty in the Afro-Peruvian music of his homeland translates seamlessly to son jarocho.

The group’s third album, *Yerba Buena*, was released in May 2008. It features an expanded palette of sounds and rhythms – including quena (Andean flute), zamponas (bamboo panpipes), accordion, organ and other electric keyboards, and rock- and Colombian vallenato-inspired grooves – as the group continues to expand the borders of son jarocho.

Of their second CD, *Floreando* (2003), Chuy Varela wrote in *Latin Beat*: “...a stunning neo-traditionalist performance...vocally rich harmonic delivery with an infectious dance-happy energy...sterling sonic reflection and impeccable musicianship...¡Vámonos al jardín!” And Putumayo World Music’s 2001 compilation *Music of Mexico* features “La Bruja” from the group’s well-received first CD, *Nuevo Son Jarocho* (1998).

Nominated for **Best Latin/Salsa Artist in the 2003 L.A. Weekly Music Awards** and the recipient of an **L.A. Treasures Award from the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs**, Conjunto Jardín is dedicated to the promotion and diffusion of *all* jarocho music and specializes in making the music accessible to non-Spanish-speaking audiences.

Son jarocho comes from the Mexican state of Veracruz on the Gulf of Mexico. The city of Veracruz, an important port for five centuries, was the point of entry for cultural influences from Africa, the Caribbean and the old world. This rich musical style has roots in Mexico’s three cultures – Spanish, African and indigenous.

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