

Charanga Tropical

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Charanga Tropical is a nine-piece salsa orchestra featuring three violins, flute, and a sizzling Latin rhythm section. *Minneapolis Star Tribune* calls the band “a pick to click” while *City Pages* describes the group as “a musical delight and a visual spectacle.” The ensemble blends the old with the new to create a sound that is classic yet modern. Music that is rich in harmony and melody, fantastic for listening and superb for dancing.

With an instrumentation that dates back to the roots of Cuban music, **Charanga Tropical** is one of the only groups of its kind performing in the United States. The band repertoire features rarely heard *danzones* and a spicy variety of *modern son*, *salsa*, *cha cha cha*, and *timba*. The group is comprised of master musicians from Cuba, Brazil, Mexico, and the United States. Their collective accomplishments include international tours, platinum recordings, doctorate degrees, and multiple Latin Grammy nominations. Formed in 2006, **Charanga Tropical** has released a CD and DVD and has performed at elite nightclubs and major festivals.

Smooth strings, Caribbean beats, and a sound that inspires visions of Old Havana at sunset. This is **Charanga Tropical**.

Musician Bios

At the core of ***Charanga Tropical's*** authentic sound are Cubans Damian Rodríguez and Viviana Pintado. Damian Rodríguez grew up in Havana but also spent much time in the Cuban countryside visiting family and riding horses. He has been a professional singer and percussionist for over twenty-five years, performing with Latin groups from Miami to New York. A showman with personality and presence, Mr. Rodríguez expertly starts the musical party and keeps it hot.

Viviana Pintado is star pianist and vocalist. Like Rodríguez she is also from Havana. After studying at Cuba's most prestigious music schools, Viviana joined the orchestra of salsa queen *Albita*. During the eight-year period that followed Viviana toured internationally, recorded multiple CDs, and received three Latin Grammy nominations. In the late 1990's Viviana left *Albita's* group, moved to the United States, and resettled in Miami, Florida. Within a year she was named *Best Pianist* and *Best Vocalist* by *The Miami Herald*. In 2004 Viviana relocated to Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Flautist and musical director Douglas Little was already an elite jazz musician and composer before ***Charanga Tropical***. His credits included performances throughout Europe and the United States, several CDs, and compositions for jazz groups, saxophone quartets, and orchestra. In 2002 he traveled to Cuba for music research and first heard the unique flute sound in Cuban music. Inspired, Little returned to Cuba in 2005, rented an apartment in Havana, and arranged for extensive lessons with Joaquín Oliveros, master flautist for the groups of Chucho Valdés and Guillermo Rubalcaba. While on the island Little also studied with flautist Jorge "Lele" Leliebre (Grammy winner with *Los Van Van*) and pianist/arranger Andrés Alén (Latin Grammy nominations, formerly with Arturo Sandoval).

The percussionists of ***Charanga Tropical*** are from Brazil, Eliezer Freitas-Santos (congas) and from Mexico Mariano Flores (drum set/timbales). Eliezer Freitas-Santos is from Salvador de Bahia, one of Brazil's greatest cities for music and culture. As a youth he drummed in samba groups for the biggest Carnival celebrations in the world. Later as a professional, he lived for fourteen years in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Eliezer has performed throughout the Americas and Europe. Since coming to the United States in 2003, he has worked with a range of world music groups and appeared on numerous recordings.

Mariano Flores is from Mexico City but established his musical reputation in the nightclubs and beachside resorts of Mexico's eastern coast. Performing with Cuban musicians and others, Flores became an expert across a range of styles, from salsa to son, jazz to rock. In 2002 Mariano relocated to the United States and now performs with multiple groups in the Upper Midwest.

Mark Haynes is a musician of the highest caliber. Former bassist for *Flyte Time Productions*, Mark recorded two platinum selling CDs with Janet Jackson and appeared on dozens of other major recordings. He is a longtime member of the Grammy winning gospel group *Sounds Of Blackness* with whom he has toured throughout the United States, Europe and Asia. During 1990's Mark was based out of New York. More recently he has spent considerable time in Montreal and Paris.

The violinists of ***Charanga Tropical*** are Christian Zamora, Kerri Fabyanske, and Janey Christoffersen. Zamora is a noted classical and tango soloist who has played with several orchestras and ensembles. Fabyanske has a doctorate in violin performance and is a noted teacher as well as performer. Christoffersen has received many scholarships and awards throughout her musical career and is also an excellent salsa dancer. Together the three violinists create the rich string sound of ***Charanga Tropical***.

Press

“A Pick to Click!”

-Tom Surowicz, *Star Tribune* (6/24/07)

“Good Times With Charanga Tropical, discover this nine-piece band’s music, unlike any other in these parts... material from the traditional danzones of the 1920s and ‘30s to compelling arrangements of modern Afro-Cuban pop from the likes of *Los Van Van*. With a trio of violinists and a flute, the music swoons with rich harmonies, peeps up slightly for some engaging cha chas, and led by powerhouse pianist Viviana Pintado (who’s worked with the great Cuban vocalist Albita and was thrice nominated for a Latin Grammy) cascades into **glorious salsas**...

It’s a musical delight and a visual spectacle.”

-Britt Robson *City Pages* (1/10/07)

“Viviana Pintado vocals are rich and powerful, and her keyboard comping and soloing reveal a dynamic and emotional range...”

-Andrea Canter, *JazzPolice.com* (9/25/05)

Charanga Tropical has introduced Minnesotans to **authentic salsa**... The group has had regular gigs at the Varsity Theater as well as appearing at the Dakota Jazz Club and other top venues...

Use your dancing shoes and shake it up.”

-Andrea Canter, *JazzPolice.com* (6/29/07)

“Jazz with a Tropical Flavor... distinctive instrumentation sets it apart from most other local Latin groups: The typical horn section has been traded for three violins, along with flute, piano/vocals with a full Latin rhythm section- congas, percussion, timbales and bass. The strings and flute are key for playing in the danzón style. This traditional form was popular in the 1920s, ‘30s and ‘40s... Douglas Little, who leads several other jazz groups, formed the band. He said... “This is the most popular thing I’ve ever done. **This band is the one people really dig.”**

-Judy Arginteanu, *Star Tribune* (11/26/06)

“After a decade as one of the area’s top bebop leaders, the saxophonist, flautist, and composer Douglas Little has dived headfirst into Cuban jazz... *Charanga Tropical*, Little’s nine-member orchestra [is]... an exploration of the **rarely heard charanga style**: salsa with strings, no brass, plenty of percussion, male vocal chants, and, in this case, Little on flute. Little wonder, you might say, that **this group has gained a loyal following** for its regular salsa nights at the Varsity Theater in Minneapolis.

-Jim Meyer, *Minnesota Monthly* (3/1/07)



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Personal

Damian Rodríguez	-	Vocals & Percussion
Viviana Pintado	-	Vocals & Piano
Douglas Little	-	Vocals & Flute
Eliezer Freitas-Santos	-	Congas
Mariano Flores	-	Timables & Drum Set
Mark Haynes	-	Bass
Christian Zamora	-	Violin
Kerri Fabyanske	-	Vocals & Violin
Janey Christoffersen	-	Vocals & Violin

Contact

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Note:

Charanga Tropical is represented by several entertainment agencies. If you have already been working with an agent regarding a booking, please continue to work with that individual. Gracias.