



Wildman of Rhythm: The Life and Music of Benny Moré

John Radanovich

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Benny More (1919-1963) was one of the giants at the center of the golden age of Cuban music. Arguably the greatest singer ever to come from the island, his name is still spoken with reverence and nostalgia by Cubans and Cuban exiles alike.

Unable to read music, he nevertheless wrote more than a dozen Cuban standards. His band helped shape what came to be known as the Afro-Cuban sound and, later, salsa. More epitomized the Cuban big-band era and was one of the most important precursors to the music later featured in the Buena Vista Social Club. Even now, to hear his recordings for the first time, it is impossible not to be thrilled and amazed.

Journalist John Radanovich has spent years tracking down the musicians who knew More and More family members, seeking out rare recordings and little-known photographs. Radanovich provides the definitive biography of the man and his music, whose legacy was forgotten in the larger scheme of political difficulties between the United States and Cuba. Even the exact spelling of More's first name was unknown until now. The author also examines the milieu of Cuban music in the 1950s, when Havana was the playground of Hollywood stars and the Mafia ran the nightclubs and casinos.



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