

HAMMOCK HOUSE

AFRICA CARIBE

PRODUCED • MIXED BY JOAQUIN "JOE" CLAUSSELL

ZANIA



CÓDIGO
music



HAMMOCK HOUSE

By Andy Battaglia

Joaquin “Joe” Claussell hails from a part of Brooklyn that could double as the setting for a fantastical sort of *Brooklyn of the mind*. He grew up a few blocks from 5th Avenue, a teeming thoroughfare on the edge of a homey neighborhood known as Park Slope. Day and night, pretty much ceaselessly, action happens as it has for ages. Businesses bustle as they did decades ago. Cars with souped-up speakers blare by. Old people shuffle down the sidewalk. Mothers push strollers with wailing babies inside. Corner delis spit out people sipping grape soda and scratching off lottery tickets: fat ladies from the around the way, cruising dudes in crisp new Yankees hats, young kids in T-shirts as big as sails. Black, brown, white, young, old, straight, gay, sketchy, crafty, shifty...

There’s life everywhere, in manic and tranquil balance.

Joe wants to show us where he bought his first record, a little neighborhood shop he’d told us about at lunch the day before. “We” is a group of three of us following Joe around for a few days, to see where he lives and where he does what he does. Lunch was at El Viejo Yayo, a Latin restaurant that Joe has been going to since he was a kid and continues to swear is the best in all of New York City. Locals sat chatting up the cooks at the counter, with lots of smiles going around. We ordered plates that wound up being big

enough to feed each of us for days. Was it good? Very: the rice & beans were perfect, the *pollo al horno* – or roast chicken – fell right off the bone, and the fried plantains!

The record shop was a different kind of good, an out-of-time, out-of-mind, *bizarro* kind of good. The store is called the Record & Tape Center, and it's still run by the same owner, now 73, who hasn't changed much at all since Joe bought his first piece of music there as a kid (a copy of Led Zeppelin's *III*, incidentally). A handful of CDs from a few years ago sit in the window, faded from the sun and covered with dust. Inside it's mostly old vinyl on display – records by The Five Satins, The Chi-Lites, Engelbert Humperdinck, The Rolling Stones, and reams of artists whose work resides in the etched grooves of old 45s. The place is a mess and smells like a grandfather's basement. It's not the kind of record store run by meticulous collectors or movers who learn how to price things online. It's just a big, weird, slightly crazy old room in Brooklyn where music has come to accumulate for close to 40 years and counting.

Joe flips through the stock, with that impressive finger/thumb motion mastered by crate-digging DJs the world over. He doesn't turn over anything of note before we have to go. But he looks happy simply to be there, searching for he doesn't know what in a place that just might have it. He's near home, in the kind of old record shop where masterpieces of the Fania Records catalog originally thrived – and where they still sometimes hide or hibernate or just hang out, waiting to be heard again.



Broadway RECORDING STUDIOS INC.

CBS THEATRE BUILDING • 1697 BROADWAY, NEW YORK 19, N. Y. • SUITE 1005

CLIENT FANIA DATE OCT 5, 1971 SESSION NO. _____
 ADDRESS _____ TIME _____ TO _____ ORDER NO. _____
 PHONE _____ ARTIST JOE BATAAN TR's 12
 PRODUCER J. PACIFICO
 TAPE SP. T5 ORIG. O.D. REMIX EDIT TRANSFER MIX DOWN
 MASTERING PIC SYNC. (FILM) SAFETY () SMO () ENG. K SEL SYNC

CODE	TITLE	TAKE	TIME	REMARKS
	<u>I WISH YOU LOVE</u>			
		<u>T1</u>	<u>T2</u>	<u>2:24</u> (<u>T3 CT 2:40</u>) (<u>AT 4:10 - 2:40</u>)
	<u>EL REGRASSO</u>			
		<u>T1</u>	<u>CT 2:00</u>	<u>F2</u> (<u>T3</u>) <u>inc 2:00</u> (<u>PT 2</u>) <u>1:20</u> <u>1:20</u>
	<u>MUJER</u>			
		<u>T1</u>	<u>CT 4:00</u>	<u>(PT-2)</u> <u>1:20</u> <u>(EDITED)</u>

SHEET _____ REEL _____
 NC/TR - Not on this reel
 OP - OVER DUB
 M - MASTER

CI 7-1690

SS - SEL SYNC
 PS - PIC SYNC
 CT - COMPLETE TAKE
 FS - FALSE START

“We used to jam all that music at home. To be part of it now, to watch Fania labels spin on records in front of me... I can’t believe I had a chance to mess with this stuff. Even still it blows my mind.” That’s Joe, talking about the past year or so he spent working on the music that makes up *Hammock House*. He talks about it with a slightly awed tone reserved for a project for which he listened back to his past and literally held history in his hands.

Have you ever seen an old studio-session tape reel? Ever picked one up, marveled at its weight, stared into the gleaming black plastic spooled around its center?

Joe shows us one in his office. He’s driven us over the Brooklyn Bridge to Lower Manhattan, not far from the sputtering construction at the World Trade Center. He rents space there, in Tribeca, for Sacred Rhythm and Spiritual Life, two labels he helps run. It’s also the site of a personal studio where he works on pre-production stuff and stores some of what he claims – quite convincingly – is a collection of more than a million records. A whole wall’s worth of shelves hold countless classics: Miles Davis, Fela Kuti, Jimi Hendrix, a set of recordings from NASA’s landing on the moon, *The History of the House Sound of Chicago*.

But it’s something in a battered cardboard box that he’s holding out for inspection. Inside is a round metal reel wrapped with many feet of rolled magnetic tape, and a crumbling “Track Report” sheet from some matter-of-fact day in the 1970s. Different numbered columns are written in with pencil: “bass,” “guitar,” “sax,” “conga,” “bone” (trombone, it turns out). A scrawl of names appears in the upper right-hand corner, with some cryptic notes marking other important parts of what seems to have been a rather hot and complicated Latin jam.

It’s kind of... incredible.

“When the carrier came to my place with all these boxes, I had an Indiana Jones moment, like when he opens the treasure chest and the glow of gold light shines up on

his face. It was miraculous that they were still around, and the history of all this stuff is just amazing. When I opened these multi-tracks up, the pleasure of having a full-on string orchestra from back in the day that you can actually work with...”

That’s Joe again, drifting off on a thought he can’t quite complete with words. He’s talking about the many archival tapes he got his hands on – old multi-track tapes from the Fania catalog with individual parts that could be isolated and then remixed, reimagined, recombined.

“I would listen to these songs and think *what am I going to do to that?!* A lot of them sounded perfect as they were. But the mentality of the ‘60s and ‘70s, when it came to music, people were just creating as *artists* – from the soul, from the heart. They took a lot of the technical stuff for granted. They were making music, not thinking about different mixes or anybody touching their art in the future. So I tried to keep the integrity of what’s there. Fania is very sacred to the Puerto Rican and Cuban heritage, so it was important that it get taken in by the right hands.”

Joe grew up Puerto Rican in New York – or more precisely *Nuyorican*, with all the simmering, sweltering swirl of identity that comes to pass for a kid growing up with nine brothers and sisters (and a shared family drum set) in roiling, toiling Brooklyn.

“When I think about my home growing up, more abundant than even love was music. We were bombarded with music 24-7, all kinds: rock, Top 40, African music. We were fed everything at once. And Latin music was flying all around, in the neighborhood, up from the basement, through the windows, in the parks. My mother would turn us on to all the Latin jams.”

What you hear on *Hammock House* are more than mere remixes. Each track was approached and assembled differently, each on its own terms. As Joe says, “Some songs





were edited, some were time-stretched... many parts were re-recorded... some new parts were recorded on top.”

Now we’re sitting in a recording studio on Manhattan’s Lower East Side. It’s dark out, on a side-street tucked away in a gritty/glitzy neighborhood marked by dilapidated Jewish synagogues and fashionable boutique bars. Joe is here to do some tracking with his brother Jose, a celebrated percussionist in his own right who augmented many of the drum parts on *Hammock House*. The session feels like a family affair, which seems to be the case wherever Joe goes (even when it’s just him alone with three strangers following him around).

Both Claussells are wearing headphones, with congas between their knees. Jose lays down some spirited syncopation, grunting and humming while he plays. Joe sways from side to side, lost in music while figuring out where the new drum lines will fit. Both spend much of their time beneath the bright studio lights with their eyes closed, but they seem to be able to see each other – or at least *hear* each other as they work their way into a sound they both grew up learning.

“The cultural aspect of this is what the entire point of remixing is all about,” Joe says. “It’s a great privilege to work on someone else’s music, especially when it has the vibe from when the music was actually created. To play these old tapes and listen to all the excerpts with sounds of people saying ‘Take 1’ and snorting cocaine or whatever those guys were doing, you get blessed by that time. It’s deep.”

He looks down for a while, then back up.

“How many kids out here on 5th Avenue in Brooklyn now even know what Fania was? Maybe some of them might hear this and get turned on. That’s how the whole chain reaction happens.”



TRACK NOTES, AS TOLD BY JOAQUIN “JOE” CLAUSSELL

Lou Perez, “Fantasia Africano”

I didn't know this track before I started on this project, but I immediately liked the idea in the title of an “African fantasy.” The point of this remix was to give listeners the sense that they were entering a jungle, where a whole new world opens up. Historically, all of this music originated in Africa and then, through the movement of the slave trade, found itself in different parts of the world. It was important to me to establish the root of it. I used a lot of natural forest, jungle, and animal sounds to give it a sense of walking in. Then a flute comes in, and then it goes heavy into percussion and piano – like at a tribal gathering. What I kept from the original multi-track was the flute, some of the percussion. Everything else I reproduced: the jungle sounds, more percussion... The story begins in Africa and then crosses into the new world.

Jai Veda, “Undeniable Love”

This song is actually not from the old archive. I produced it from scratch. My reason for suggesting we use it was to give this project a legitimate sense of *today*, of something new and something now that fits into the idea of “hammock house.” I was working with Jai Veda before I started working on this project, and this is a song that spoke to me at the time I started, because it has a sort of Latin groove that complements the rest. It was just a demo then; it originally had more of a hip-hop rhythm, so I called in my brother Jose to help me revamp it into a more Latin-flavored rhythm, with the end result being a two-part story traveling from one into the other. Jai freaked out when I told her she was going to be on this.





Mongo Santamaria, “Mambo Mongo”

I absolutely love this song. I used to jam the original of this all the time back in the day, but not many people know about it. So I thought, if this project is about a DJ exposing certain lost or undiscovered music to the world, then I have to use this. It was such a great production originally that it really needed nothing. But from my original attempt to beef up the groove, I added more percussion and new Rhodes electric-piano lines to compliment the original Rhodes chords. The new hand-drums are my brother playing alongside the original parts by Santamaria, who was a great percussionist from Cuba. Because this was recorded in the late '60s, a lot of original parts like that were buried in the mix, I guess because they were produced more for home listening.

Celia Cruz, “Chango TK”

Celia Cruz is considered the goddess of Latin/Afro-Cuban music. As a kid, I remember how everybody really looked up to her. The vibe that surrounded her was really profound. My mother *loved* her. This is a song sung in Yoruba – religious African music. The original is very minimal: just some 6/8-groove percussion with Celia singing/chanting over it. I just tried to give it a more modern edge, by adding a bass line and more percussion, both produced by my brother, and some sound effects layered and weaved throughout with bells, whistles, and African kaba. Then I brought in a piano player, Bennett Paster, who jammed for a while, having a rhythmic call-and-response conversation with the music and really complementing the melody. He's a monster!

Eddie Palmieri, “Lucumi Macumba Voodoo”

Eddie Palmieri... what can you even do to his music? This is from an album he made in 1976 for Columbia. Everything was already there, so I decided to do a more traditional remix

for this, kind of like they did in the '70s, where remixers would manipulate the existing tracks from the multi-tracks and rearrange parts that were already there. I added some percussion, but there was already a lot of percussion there, and Palmieri had such great musicians playing for him. Aside from that, he's one of the few Latin artists who used lots of delay and reverb, so I tried to give the whole thing a dub feel. The guitars are echoing, the horns are echoing. There's a lot of reverb, to give it more space and what I like to call *freakiness*.

Ray Barretto, "Exodus"

Most of this song was newly created, and again my brother Jose had a lot to do with it. Ray Barretto was such a special musician in my family life, as well as in the Latin music world. I'm not crazy about this song in particular, unless it's Bob Marley's version, but there was something about this that made me pick it. I wanted to make this a tribute to Ray, so I created a whole new intro. Everything up until the actual "Exodus" chords was created new as a tribute. I wanted people to feel the love and appreciation we all have for this man, so that's why it has such a cosmic, spiritual intro. That's the awakening, and then it goes into a Yoruba chant, saying "thank you." One of the people singing is Liliana Santamaria, who is Mongo Santamaria's daughter. I could have just taken the "Exodus" part and added a kick, a hi-hat, and some keyboards, and housed it up. But both my brother and I tried to make this something that more people could appreciate – and that Ray himself would be happy with.

Mongo Santamaria, "O Mi Shango"

This was actually the last track we worked on for this project. Back in the old days, when I first started doing remixes, I got this track from the original CD and did an edit of it. I really loved it, so I just wanted to extend it, and I remember saying then, "Man, I really wish I could get the multi-track for this and do something with it." I didn't realize this was in the Fania





catalog when we started on *Hammock House*. Then, near the end, it came up on my iPod one day on a flight to Japan and I thought, “Hmmm, maybe *this* is available!” So I called and asked, it turned out it was there, and I flipped out. For this version, I took the song from a Latin groove and gave it more of an Afrobeat feel. We got some horn players involved. And it feels kind of house-y with that four-on-the-floor beat.

Eddie Palmieri, “Yoruba Chant”

The only part of this song that I kept was the beginning. It went into some ballroom-dancing part that I couldn’t do anything with, so we re-did the rest. I came to it as a track that was on the multi-track reel of another song I had asked for, and I heard the chant part of it and thought, “Oh, I can do something with *this*.” With all the rest of the craziness and all the African stuff going on elsewhere, I thought, “OK, we’ve got to have a *dance* track here.” In the end we ended with a new tune with a Caribbean kind of feel.

Ismael Miranda, “Me Voy Ahora”

I stumbled upon this track while doing research and listening to all the reissued Fania CDs at the beginning of the project. I heard it in the car, driving down Prospect Park West on my way to get an oil change one afternoon, and I just fell in love with it. It was on a compilation of ballads, and he’s singing about how he’s leaving his woman. The emotion of it – it’s obvious he did this song for a reason. It really blew me away. The whole production of it was already beautiful, so I wondered what I could do to take it to a different level. The strings were in there already, but you couldn’t hear them the same way in the original. So I created a second part to the composition that begins around the 3:00 mark. Using only the original strings, I created what I like to think of as a signature Joe Claussell production, just from us trying to do something new. It’s a perfect ending.

THE MIX

My goal for the mix-CD was to create an epic journey that begins in the Motherland (Africa) to moves to New York. I wanted to do a futuristic mix, where stories are being created with soundscapes and tapestries, and segues work as introductions to each story. I wanted to create bridges through different rhythms, so I worked with my brother Jose, as well as other percussionists and musicians in the studio, to create parts that flow between. I wanted to create the feeling of moving from, say, the idea of “rhythm” in one scene into another scene of “love,” where you can feel the actual emotion of love. I mixed it live, with four CD players, effects, and reel-to-reel, then took it into the studio and tightened up some of the levels through editing. I wanted to mix it live so you get more of a human feel from it, to stay true to the texture of this music. And I really wanted it to reflect on the process of working on this whole project. Looking back, I’m honored and grateful to get to work on such historical music – and music that I grew up with.

A NOTE FROM JOE

Upon exiting, I would like for those who are interested to know that there would have been no way I could achieve such a journey if it wasn’t for the help of my brother Jose Claussell, keyboardist Bennett Paster, and, last but not least, engineer Fran Cathcart of Eastside Sound in New York. My hat goes off to Michael Rucker for his guidance with all of this as well.

DISC ONE

1. Lou Perez **Fantasia Africano**
(Writing Credits) Publishing Credits from the album *Album Title*
2. Jai Veda **Undeniable Love**
(Writing Credits) Publishing Credits from the album *Album Title*
3. Mongo Santamaria **Mambo Mongo**
(Writing Credits) Publishing Credits from the album *Album Title*
4. Celia Cruz **Chango**
(Writing Credits) Publishing Credits from the album *Album Title*
5. Eddie Palmieri **Lucumi Macumba Voodoo**
(Writing Credits) Publishing Credits from the album *Album Title*
6. Ray Barretto **Exodus**
(Writing Credits) Publishing Credits from the album *Album Title*
7. Mongo Santamaria **O Mi Shango**
(Writing Credits) Publishing Credits from the album *Album Title*
8. Eddie Palmieri **Yoruba Chant**
(Writing Credits) Publishing Credits from the album *Album Title*
9. Ismael Miranda **Me Voy Ahora**
(Writing Credits) Publishing Credits from the album *Album Title*

DISC TWO

Joaquin “Joe” Claussell **Live Mix**
(Writing Credits) Publishing Credits



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