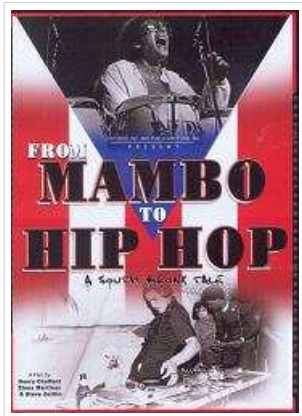


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From Mambo to Hip Hop: A South Bronx Tale



The South Bronx has historically been fertile ground for musical trends and artists that have had an impact on the Latino population in the United States and the rest of Latin America. These musical influences have also permeated the culture of the United States and the rest of the world.

"From Mambo to Hip Hop: A South Bronx Tale" is a dynamic, entertaining and very educative documentary that smartly guides us through the evolution of the musical environment of the New York Latin sound.

The film takes us to the beginning, when Puerto Ricans, hit by hard times, began migrating to New York City after World War II. This process was natural, because they have been US Citizens since 1917. The new arrivals initially settled in East Harlem and the South Bronx, which provided for a very rich and diverse environment. We then fast-forward to recent times, to a high school reunion at Public School 52 (PS 52), in which many stars of the mambo and salsa eras got together for a concert. We see, for example, percussionists Orlando Marin, Manny Oquendo (recently deceased), Ray Barretto, and Benny Bonilla; trombonist Reynaldo Jorge; singer Joe Quijano and others. They talk about the golden years of mambo, how they use to play handball in their younger years, among others things. In addition, percussionist Bobby Sanabria, trombonist Willie Colón, pianist Eddie Palmieri, and others are interviewed and they also talk about the exciting times during the fifties, sixties and seventies, when the mambo, and later salsa, ruled Latin Music in New York City. We see archival footage from legendary Arsenio Rodriguez, the Fania All Stars concert at the Yankee Stadium, Teatro Puerto Rico, and we meet Mike Amadeo at his record store (Casa Amadeo).

During the seventies the South Bronx began experiencing negative changes, which gave birth to gangs. We learn that, as one of the interviewees say, "Hip-Hop came from desperation, people's basic need for an outlet." Hip-Hop, we are told, was a street alternative to disco music. These changes also affected the Puerto Rican communities in the area, and, in addition of assimilating the new trends, they incorporated the mambo and salsa from their parents into the new art form.

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