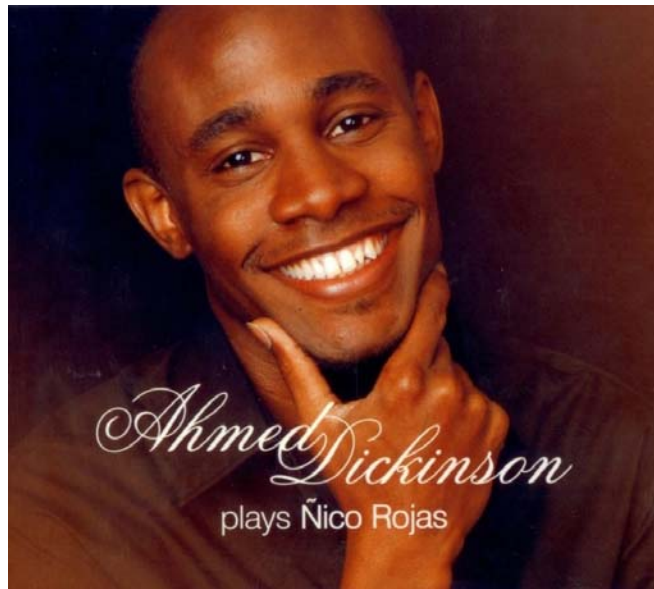


PRESS RELEASE



AHMED DICKINSON plays ÑICO ROJAS

Release date: 6TH OCTOBER 2008



**Highly-acclaimed Cuban
guitarist pays homage to one of
the greats of the *Filin'* era.**

Ahmed Dickinson's love affair with the music of Níco Rojas began when they both played at the International Guitar Festival in Havana, Cuba in 2000. After approaching the composer at the festival to express how much he enjoyed his music and would love to play some of it, Ahmed was invited to Níco's house. It came as a surprise to Ahmed once there to learn that the great majority of Níco's work remained unpublished and unrecorded. A surprise not least because Níco can count **Beny Moré, Bebo Valdéz, Chucho Valdéz, Tito Puente, Frank Emilio Flynn, Leo Brouwer, César Portillo de la Luz, Adolfo Guzmán, and Wynton Marsalis** amongst his many fans, past and present.

Ñico, a hydraulic engineer by profession, only ever had the bare minimum of music tuition and had never written his compositions in notated musical form. So, after that first meeting in 2000 Ñico and Ahmed began a collaboration that would result in the transcription for the very first time of the majority of Ñico's work, the result of which is this astonishing recording. For Ahmed, transcribing Ñico's music was a veritable labour of love. There were only ever a very few recordings of Ñico playing in existence, most of which were made by family and friends at parties and other social occasions – Ñico never having considered himself a “musician”. His ability to perform is now sadly hampered by severe arthritis but the two musicians were fortunate to have the assistance of Ñico's son, Jesús, who had learnt to play some of his father's music when younger.

Ñico's music is from the *Filin'* era and combines traditional Cuban rhythms and styles with harmonies and melodies deeply penetrated by jazz.

AHMED DICKINSON

Ahmed was born in Havana, Cuba in 1978. He graduated with First Class Honours from The Upper Institute of Arts (Havana) in Guitar (indeed, such is his talent that he was able to graduate a year early). He then went on to study at postgraduate level in London, at both The Royal College of Music and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

Although he graduated in classical and contemporary music, he specialises in playing Cuban and Latin American guitar repertoire. In recent years he has performed at the Dublin Guitar Week, Ireland and The Hispano-American Guitar Festival in Tijuana, Mexico.

In UK he has been performing for Yehudi Menuhin's Live Music Now Scheme and more recently for Concordia Foundation. He also collaborates with Spanish guitar virtuoso Eduardo Niebla.

In London Ahmed has given concerts at The Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA), Wigmore Hall, Victoria & Albert Museum, St. James' Church Piccadilly, Southwark Cathedral, The Bolivar Hall and the National Gallery.

He has been awarded the “Ivor Mairant”, “Issac Nicola”, “Musicalia” and “Amadeo Roldan” prizes for his guitar playing.

ANTONIO (ÑICO) ROJAS BEOTO

Born in 1921 in Havana, Ñico was bought a guitar as a child but initially occupied himself by simply listening to music, absorbing influences as diverse

as classical guitar repertoire, Italian and German opera and, most importantly, Cuban *trova*, North American popular music and jazz. It was only later in life that he received lessons in the rudimentary basics of guitar technique, which would eventually go on to serve him so well.

A contemporary of Bebo Valdéz (Chucho's father), Níco began to compose after becoming part of the *Filin'* movement alongside his contemporaries: César Portillo de la Luz and José Antonio Mendez. Despite never writing down his compositions, this never seemed to impede the music, pieces and songs that "came out of his head", seemingly without effort.

Now aged 86, Níco, whilst still a musical genius, is prevented by the severe arthritis in his hands from playing the guitar like he once was able.

TRACKLISTING:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Guajira con Filin' | Guajira* |
| 2. Francito y Alfonsito | Cha-cha-cha |
| 3. Jairo y Juan | Motivo de Danzón* |
| 4. En el abra del Yumuri | Fantasia |
| 5. Elías malogrado genio | Motivo de Danzón* |
| 6. Homenaje a Bebo | Mambo |
| 7. Helenita y Jorgito | Danzón* |
| 8. Lilliam | Bolero |
| 9. Chicha y Ana Rosa | Tumbao* |
| 10. Retrato de un médico violinista | Fantasia |
| 11. Illinai y Rosita | Balada* |
| 12. Lay y Egües | Son* |
| 13. Tres palabras | Canción* |
| 14. Tony y Jesusito | Mambo* |
| 15. Marta y Frank | Canción* |
| 16. Guajira a mi madre | Guajira |

*Transcribed by Ahmed Dickinson

Ahmed Dickinson is currently playing to sell-out audiences around the UK and has live dates in mainland Europe lined up. Ahmed is based in London and is available for interviews.

For more details contact:

Jackie Harrison
01424 200 415
07855 465 909
jackieharrison@btinternet.com

<http://www.myspace.com/ahmeddickinson>