



**Viento de Agua** is an original Latin dance band with a groundbreaking new sound. The term itself refers to a phrase used in Puerto Rico to describe the damp and humid air that precedes a heavy rainstorm. The traditional Afro-Puerto Rican rhythms, Bomba & Plena, are combined with other Afro-Caribbean rhythms and jazz to create a fresh contemporary style. The result of this fusion is an explosive sound that both seduces skilled dancers and stimulates sophisticated listeners.

Hector "Tito" Matos, the director of **Viento de Agua**, explains the concept: "Our purpose is to disseminate our original and creative way of performing these ancestral rhythms not only to our Latino audience but to the rest of the world music audience. **Viento de Agua** is ready to be the flagship of Bomba & Plena around the world.

The ensemble was conceived and created in New York City in the fall of 1997. Percussionist and singer Héctor "Tito" Matos, a native of Santurce, Puerto Rico came up with the idea that master musicians Ricardo Pons and Alberto Toro helped materialize with the support of 3 generations of Bomba & Plena practitioners that included Sammy Tanco, Juan Gutiérrez and Camilo Molina. They recruited some of the best musicians in New York's musical scene to play the aggressive arrangements: drummer Bobby Sanabria, pianist Desmar Guevara, bassist Waldo Chávez, trombone player Joe Fiedler, and trumpet player Richard Nant were part of the original band.

During the fall of 1998, **Viento de Agua** presented their debut production under the Qbadisc Label, **De Puerto Rico al Mundo**, a recording that was ranked top ten by *The New York Times*' Peter Watrous and *Latin Beat Magazine* as well as many other important publications. In 2000 **Viento de Agua** was awarded the Sunshine Award for best Hispanic Caribbean production and in 2001, the band had their first solo concert at a sold-out Hostos Center for the Arts & Culture.

**Viento de Agua** has performed in many important stages, including: WolfTraps Jazz Festival, MassMoca Jazz Fest, Lincoln Center's Outdoors, Lincoln Center's MidSummer Nights, Celebrate Brooklyn, New Jersey Performing Arts Center, Smithsonian's Folkways Festival, Festival Claridad, Lowell Folk Festival, American Folk Festival, Bomba & Plena Festival, Bomplenazo, and Afro-Caribbean Festival.

After returning to his native Puerto Rico in 2004, director Tito Matos restructured the band incorporating some of the island's up-and-coming musicians and recorded their 2<sup>nd</sup> album, **Materia Prima**, an all percussive master piece produced by the prestigious Smithsonian Institution's label, Folkways. **Viento de Agua** continues to be at the fore-front of contemporary bomba & plena performing in important national and international stages.

Moreover, Viento de Agua is a non-for-profit organization dedicated to the promotion and dissemination of Bomba & Plena. In 2009 the group released to great reviews their 3<sup>rd</sup> album, ***Fruta Madura***, and during the summer of 2012 the organization released a documentary entitled, ***Plenazos Callejeros***. The band just released their 4<sup>th</sup> album, ***Opus IV***, in November 2013.