

Time Out

London's living guide
July 12-19 2000 No.1560 £1.95



John Cusack brings
Nick Hornby's 'High
Fidelity' to the screen

2⁴1

Offer! Half-price tickets
at London's top attractions



Cool off!

Take the heat out of city life with our
SUMMER SURVIVAL GUIDE



+ **Morcheeba taste freedom** • Rhona Cameron writes •
Where to take the kids • **Theatre's bright new things**



28

9 770049 391094

Contents



16



24



20

First Word

6 Letters from the readers.

Upfront

- 9** **'THE WITCHES OF EASTWICK'** Devilish Darryl Van Horne arrives in the West End PLUS Sidelines.
- 11** **ARE YOU GAY ENOUGH?** Performance artist Ursula Martinez administers aversion therapy PLUS *Peter Paphides* philosophises about builders.

Londonbeat

- 12** **NEWS** News from across the capital.
- 14** **SMOKE WITH IRE** The illicit trade in cut-price cigarettes is worth £2.5 billion. But where do these goods come from, and what does the Government propose to do about it? *Ruth Bloomfield* reports.

Features

- 16** **JOHN CUSACK** The easygoing star of 'Being John Malkovich' has overseen the transfer of Nick Hornby's 'High Fidelity' from novel to film, and from London to Chicago. *Ross Fortune* meets him.
- 20** **MORCHEEBA** The trip hop survivors prepared for the release of their smoky new album with a gig in Athens. *Chris Salmon* went along, and discovered the trio had very good reason to be cheerless.
- 23** **RUBÉN BLADES** The salsa hero – and actor, and would-be politician – is making a rare trip to the UK for next week's SALSA 2000 festival, says *Sue Steward*.
- 24** **RHONA CAMERON** The sparky 'lesbian comedienne' (sorry, Rhona) has a sitcom with her name on it. In an exclusive piece for

Time Out, she explains why 'Rhona' is nothing like 'Ellen'.

210 **LONDON LIVES** The Traviss brothers.

Sell Out

- 25** **SHOP TALK** All the latest sales and bargains, plus the Oxo/Peugeot Design Awards.
- 30** **COVER STORY SUMMER SURVIVAL GUIDE** When the sun's out and London's a sticky, sweaty nightmare, where and how can you cool yourself down? *Mary-Ann Percy* investigates.

Eat Out

38 **PLATE EXPECTATIONS** London's latest eateries reviewed by *Guy Dimond*.

Travel

161 **TIME FOR TEA** Darjeeling PLUS news, special offers and International Agenda.

Classifieds

165 **ADS TO YOUR LIFE**

Time In

- 181** **TV** Aerial Views, plus gossip from Scanners and day-by-day listings.
- 198** **VIDEO** The latest buys and rentals.
- 200** **CABLE, SATELLITE & DIGITAL**
- 205** **RADIO** Your day-by-day guide.
- 208** **GAMES** Fingers on the triggers.
- 209** **MULTIMEDIA** Webbed wonders.

201

Page 22

Discounts for the V&A, Design Museum, Heathrow Express and more.



Page 57

300 private view tickets to give away for Zaha Hadid's new exhibition.

Page 108

Exclusive screening – 125 pairs of cinema tickets to give away.

Page 164

Take off with Time Out's Travel Writing & Photography competition.



Tiempos fugit

Salsa king Rubén Blades isn't any old Grammy-winning singer-songwriter. He's also an actor, a lawyer and a former Panamanian presidential candidate, and he's coming our way for this weekend's SALSA 2000 festival. Interview **Sue Steward**

Meet Rubén Blades, salsa's most controversial icon, outside Dee-Dee's Budget Clothing store in New York. It sounds an unlikely place to meet a multi-Grammy-winning singer-songwriter, film and stage actor, lawyer and former Presidential Candidate of Panama, but he's travelling by subway from his girlfriend's place in the Village and Dee-Dee's is near the station.

Blades cuts a distinctly non-U look for a salsa star, arriving in 82 degrees heat clad in a full-length black mac and backpack. During the walk to the Odeon Café, he gabbles apologies for his mild lateness, then, when we arrive, places an order in Spanish for a glass of the cheapest red wine.

I present him with a copy of 'Bodega Dreams', a gift from the young Spanish Harlem writer Ernesto Quinonez. He's thrilled, and wonders aloud about the lack of novelists to emerge from New York's Hispanic community. 'The barrio [Spanish Harlem] is full of stories. Why are no young writers writing them? It's 15 years since Oscar Hijuelos's "Mambo Kings". That's where Pedro Navaja came from,' he says, referring to his best known character, a Latino Mack the Knife figure born on his 1978 album 'Siembra' with Willie Colon. I tell him Quinonez has sold the screenplay and wants him to play the lead role of 'Bodega', a complex Robin

Hood figure who's rehabilitating Spanish Harlem with drugs money. He's pleased, if non-committal.

Blades is on great form – relaxed and excited about all his various projects, and obviously over the recent bad patch which included a divorce, the death of his mother, and his failure to win the Panamanian Presidential elections with his MPE party in 1994. This year, his luck turned when he

'Just because I eat rice and beans doesn't mean that I'm tied to one line of music. I like music generally.'

won the Latin Grammy for his extraordinary new album, 'Tiempos' (Seasons). As part of the 'Tiempos' tour, he's heading for London's SALSA 2000 Festival this weekend. He hollers with excitement as he reads the flyer I've brought with me: 'Oh my God, Celia [Cruz], Oscar D'Leon, Jose 'El Canario' Alberto... This is going to be incredible! It's a perfect blend, because we're going to be playing a lot of different things, old and new. Excellent!' He adds: 'Margaret Thatcher was still in power when I last played in London.'

Rubén Blades always was a controversial outsider within the salsa pack. For a start, he is Panamanian when most others are Cuban or Puerto Rican, or like his former partner, Willie Colon, NuYorican (Puerto Rican New York). With his light eyes and light skin, brown hair, and fluent English (spoken in a lilting Caribbean accent), he can pass as a non-Latino. He is neither a 90-year-old Cuban nor a hip-swivelling Puerto Rican salsa-popster, but a Harvard-trained lawyer who, even in the '80s, rejected satin suits and sequins in favour of black T-shirts and plain trousers. His popularity also hinged on his revolutionising of salsa's songs and his involvement with left politics, which made him 'persona absolutely non grata' for years in Miami, where he incurred the wrath of Florida's right-wing Cuban Americans. He swapped salsa's familiar subjects (love, lust, dancing) for anecdotal vignettes from everyday barrio life, song-poems which earned him and his producer/collaborator Willie Colon millions of record sales and scores of awards all over Latin America. In 1984, his major solo triumph 'Buscando America' ('Searching for America') brought him the cover of *Time* magazine, made him the second best known Latino after Tito Puente, and a run of Hollywood film parts.

'Buscando America' severed him from the hard New York Fania Records salsa model which had launched him. Its doo-wop, reggae and jazz influences fused into the Cuban prototype made this a brilliantly original – and timeless – collection and placed him inside the historical continuum of North American music. With 'Tiempos', Blades has literally returned to his home continent – to the Central American bridge-lands between the two continents. It isn't a salsa record, but is instead led by acoustic guitars, violins, strings, and folk instruments, steeped in South American music and as mould-breaking in its way as 'Buscando America'.

'Just because I eat rice and beans doesn't mean that I'm tied to one line of music,' he explains. 'I like music generally, and a long time ago I realised that the notion of "salsa" reduced it to music for the feet and hips, to sweat to and escape by. I wanted people to reflect on it as well, when you're not dancing. For this new album, I was looking for a violin and acoustic guitar and different kinds of rhythm from the Afro-Cuban ones which are a background for salsa. A friend of a friend in Panama [where Blades was living again during his political campaigning] gave me a CD by a Costa Rican band called Editus. Costa Rica! I had no idea there were any musicians in Costa Rica – even though it borders on Panama. Then in 1998 I was there for an ecological conference – and they were playing at the reception!' Was he worried about losing his salsa fans? 'Absolutely not. Never. But I'm sure the record company was!'

We drain our glasses and leave. As we walk down the street, a skinny young Hispanic bicycle messenger stops beside us, wide-eyed. 'Aren't you Rubén Blades?' he asks. Nodding, Blades pulls a *Village Voice* from the free bin and signs it for him. They chat about cycling; Blades says 'Cuidate, take care!', patting the man's arm. He's a natural politician. 'I've got five more music projects left to do, then I will move to Panama, period. Panama is having a real rebirth after the handing back of the Canal. We are our own country now. I have to be there by 2003 for the election in 2004.' Catch him while you can. ● SALSA 2000 takes place from 2-11pm on Sunday July 16 at Three Mills Island, E1. Tickets cost £25. See Listings: Jazz & Latin for details.