

# Musician Makes His Dream a Reality



Hector Contreras creates at his keyboard.

- Photo by Jo Anne Disney

BY JO ANNE DISNEY

Hector Contreras has always had a love for music. At the age of 5 he began playing the piano and composing songs. His parents would ask him what he was playing and he would say, "My song."

Contreras is a native of Los Angeles, moving to Pasadena 5 years ago with his wife, Emilie. She is not only his biggest fan and supporter, but is in charge of their music production company, Emilie's Garden.

Contreras admits that practicality overshadowed his dream for a time. He felt he needed to concentrate on his education, making sure he had a steady job with benefits. So Contreras obtained his Bachelors degree in Accounting from Cal State, Los Angeles and became a teacher with the Compton Unified School District. He worked there for 20 years and left to work with the County Juvenile Court System for almost another 10 years.

However, through the years his passion for music remained strong. And this year, Contreras' lifelong dream has become a reality! He has produced 2 CD's, "Hector Contreras & His Latin Jazz Ensemble" and "Soundscapes." All of the songs are composed by Contreras. The Latin CD has 14 songs, including "Pasadena Cha-Cha" one of Contreras' favorites. The other CD "Soundscapes" is amazing. In listening to the songs, any of them could

easily be a theme song for a major motion picture.

However, music has always played a part in Contreras' life. In high school, his first band was a rock and roll band called "Lagriers." They were together for about 3 years. Then while he was a senior in high school, for 3 years he played with a Latin Jazz Quartet, "Al Mesa & the Latin Four." He played 4 nights a week at the Monterey House Restaurant earning his college tuition.

Later, he ventured on his own with a band called "Moonshadow." But they were only together for about a year. Then it all came together with a band called "Orchestra Siva," playing Jazz and Salsa music. Contreras called it "Latin Jazz Funk." They must have been great since they were the opening act for the "Rolling Stones" in 1974.

During this time he continued to compose his music. His natural born talent coupled with his love of music has produced over 200 songs. In talking with Contreras about his amazing talent, he says, "I am just a conduit. All creativity comes from a divine source. I feel that my music touches the spirit since it comes from the heart." Currently, Contreras' songs are being heard on radios in France, Italy, Switzerland, Portugal and Peru.

For more information about Hector Contreras or to purchase his CD's visit [www.emiliesgarden.com](http://www.emiliesgarden.com) or call (626) 590-3411.