

BEYOND SALSA PIANO

THE CUBAN TIMBA PIANO REVOLUTION



VOLUME 6 • Iván "Melón" Lewis, Pt. 1

NOTE FOR NOTE TRANSCRIPTIONS

by Kevin Moore

photography by Tom Ehrlich

cover photo subject: Iván "Melón" Lewis

audio and video companion products available at www.timba.com/piano

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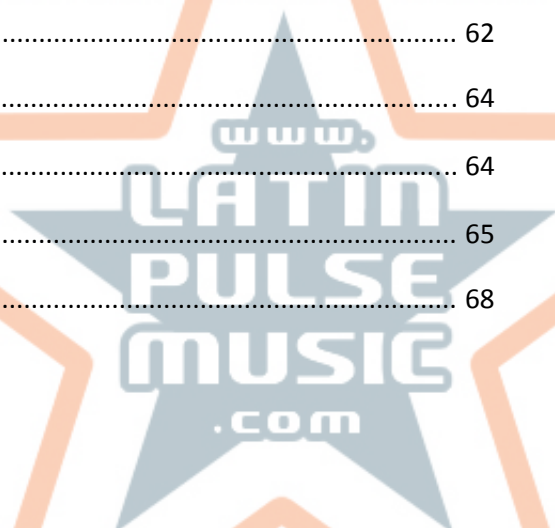
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Chapter 3: Note for Note Transcriptions

No me mires a los ojos

No me mires a los ojos 1a - basic - tracks 1 & 2

Musical notation for the first system of 'No me mires a los ojos 1a - basic - tracks 1 & 2'. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff, both in 4/4 time. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The notation shows a complex rhythmic pattern with many beamed notes and rests, characteristic of a timba piano tumbao.

No me mires a los ojos 1a - basic - tracks 1 & 2

Musical notation for the second system of 'No me mires a los ojos 1a - basic - tracks 1 & 2'. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff, both in 4/4 time. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The notation shows a complex rhythmic pattern with many beamed notes and rests, characteristic of a timba piano tumbao.

Our first tumbao is a very famous one, and a perfect example of the most critical timba piano innovation – the idea that the piano tumbao be a “hook” by which the song can be identified and that contributes greatly to the song’s popularity. If you play the above tumbao, **No me mires 1a**, for any timba fan, the person will immediately know which song it’s from.

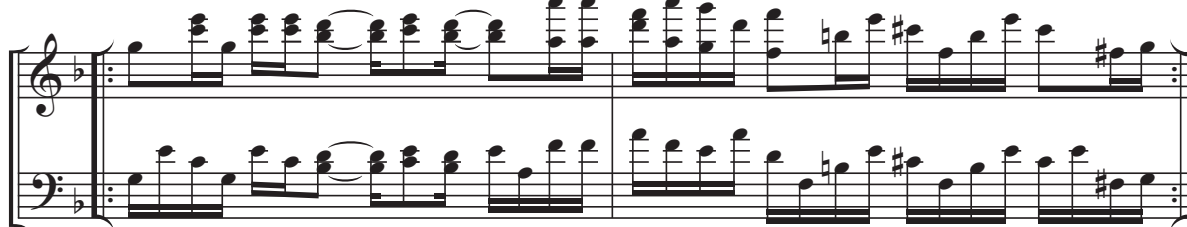
Examining the hands separately reveals another major timba piano innovation: there are three places where the left hand adds an extra note between two right hand notes, a technique never used before timba. No one seems to know who came up with this idea first, but as we’ll see shortly, Melón was the first to use it as a central part of his style.

Melón’s Fingering of Right-Hand Octaves

With regard to playing octaves in the right hand, some pianists play them, as expected, with the thumb and pinkie (fingers 1 and 5). Melón, however, often uses 1 and 4 when the octave is played on black keys, switching to the normal 1 and 5 for white key octaves. Try both methods to see which works best for your hand size. If your hand can’t reach an octave, play only the top note and experiment with the settings on your keyboard to try to approximate the timbre of playing in octaves.

La vida sin esperanza 9 uses *La vida 5's* G7#11 substitution in a way that works in the marcha gear context. Melón also occasionally used a variation of the second measure to spice up one of the other tumbaos.

La vida sin esperanza 9 - tracks 35 & 36



La vida sin esperanza 9 - tracks 35 & 36



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About the Author

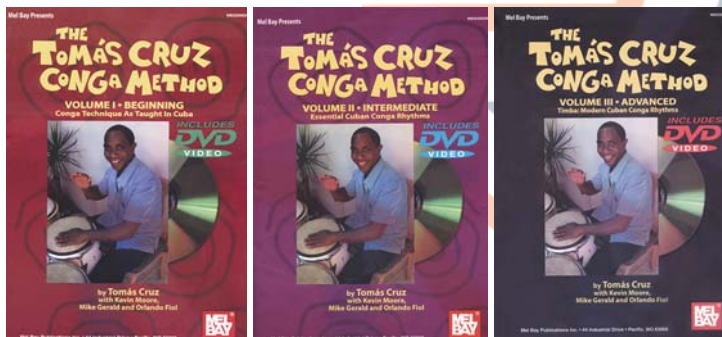


Melón Lewis, Kevin Moore – Los Angeles, 2009

Kevin Moore (kevin@timba.com) is the co-founder and music editor for the world's largest Cuban music website, www.timba.com, to which he has contributed the free online multimedia book *The Roots of Timba*, dozens of book-length articles, discographies, record analyses, interviews and the daily Cuban music blog *La última*, which is nearing its 10th year of publication.

In the early 2000s Kevin co-wrote *The Tomás Cruz Conga Method, Volumes 1-3*, a critically acclaimed method book used as a text at various educational institutions.

The Tomás Cruz Conga Method – Volumes 1, 2, and 3



Published by Mel Bay

As musical director, composer, arranger and violinist of the California-based salsa band Orquesta Gitano he co-produced the 1998 CD *Salsa Gitana*.

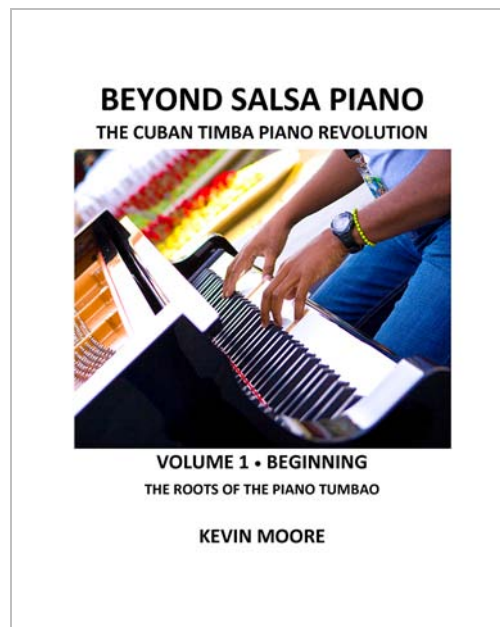


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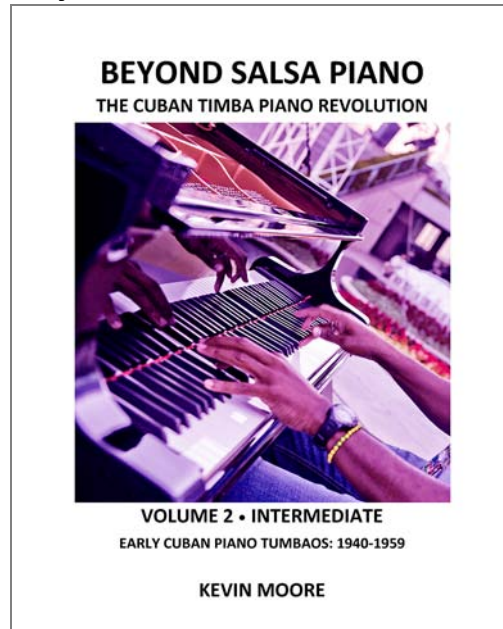
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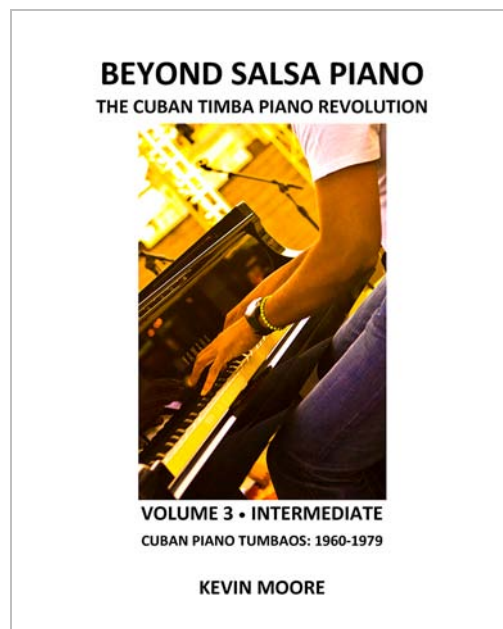
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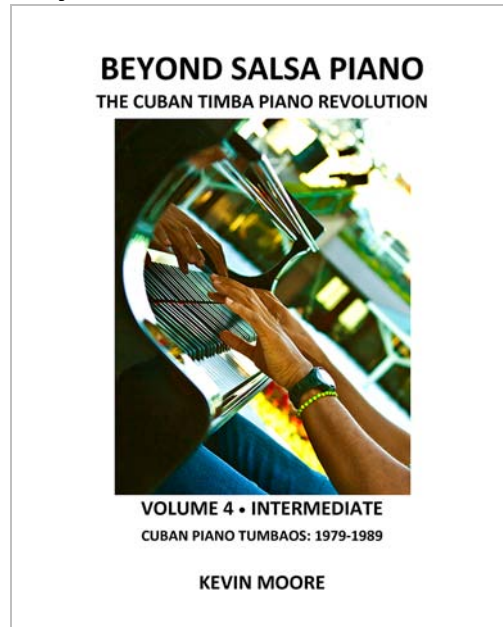


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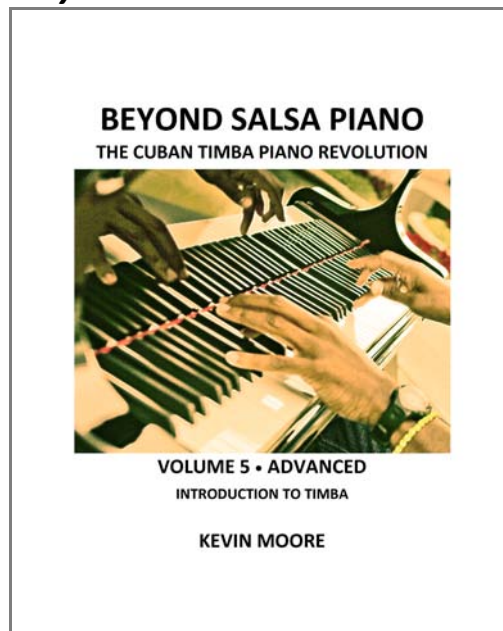
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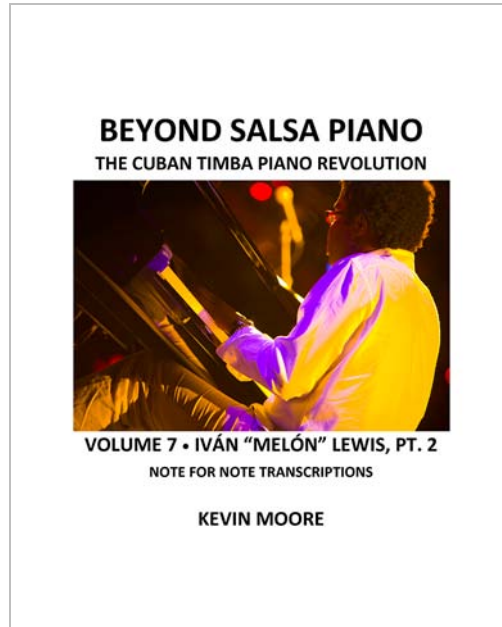
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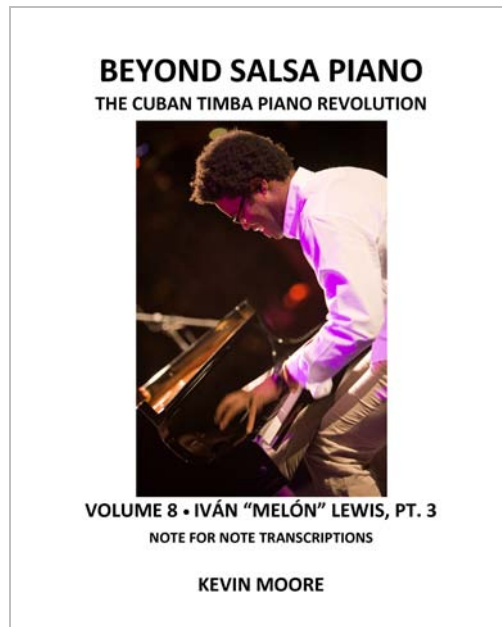


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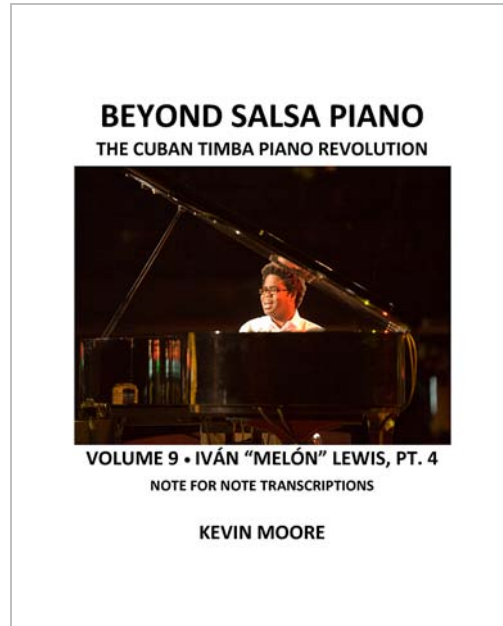
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