



This month we continue the series revisiting some of our faves from the first three CDs with a fresh look at *Pani Ti Moun*, from our second album, "PanoramaLand." This one is a Creole biguine from the Caribbean island of Martinique and the title translates to "No Children." Much like the Cajun concept of a Fais-Do-Do, when the kids have gone to bed the parents cut loose a little. Offspring or no, we hope this track inspires you in the same way!

Panorama has been blessed with a steady supply of hot-shot accordion players and Michael Ward-Bergeman is among the hottest. He and his spouse, the Venezuela-born chanteuse Yulene Velásquez, moved to New Orleans in 2013 from Gainesville, FL where she'd just finished her Master's in Choral Conducting. Michael had visited here a few times and was drawn in by the musicians playing in Jackson Square. They decided to give the Crescent City a try.

Around that time, during Carnival, when former Panorama accordionist Patrick Farrell was visiting to play alto horn in the brass band, he and I met for lunch and he told me there was another world-class accordion player now living here. Patrick had subbed for Michael in Yo-Yo Ma's Silk Road Ensemble in New York and they'd gotten to know each other. At that time we had Matt Schreiber kicking ass in the accordion chair but I started calling Michael to sub when Matt couldn't be there. Michael and Yulene both made their Panorama recording debut in the very productive June 2016 session that yielded *Les Deux Jumeaux*, *Keep On Gwine*, *Esperanzas*, *Recordando a Venezuela*, (feat. Yulene with the vocal) and *Mellow Down Easy*. That day we got five memorable tunes in roughly three and a half hours of tracking.

Then, in July 2017, when Panorama was enjoying a residency at the Copenhagen Jazz Festival, Matt let me know that his spouse Kate had landed a terrific job at Bard College in upstate New York and that they'd be moving there right away. Mixed emotions because I was happy for them in their new chapter but sad to see them go. But that's the way of the world and you deal with it. So I texted Michael immediately and Panorama had our smoothest transition between accordion players to date.

Including today's offering, Michael's unmistakable sound is on every Panorama track employing accordion since *Miss the Mississippi and You* (Sep 1, 2017). By my count (and including that 2015 session), that makes 70 appearances out of our total 117 tracks. (Plus we have one more in the can that we'll send you sooner or later, so make that 71.) Yulene has also appeared on two more since *Recordando: Bridge Over Troubled Water* and *La Negra Atilia* (April and May, 2019).

The reason I bring this up now is that Yulene, after completing a Doctorate at LSU, recently landed a terrific job as Director of Choral Activities for the University of Minnesota, Morris. They moved there in August. Mixed emotions again. It's a *really* great gig for Yulene that also affords Michael the opportunity to be a stay-at-home dad and reflect upon his next career moves. We're happy for them in their new chapter but sad to see them go. But that's the way of the world. I texted Simon Moushabeck right away (who you'll be hearing from soon) and Panorama is having another smooth transition to our next hot-shot accordion player.

In addition to playing almost daily with the Jackson Square All-Stars and serving weekly as pianist for Christ Temple Church in the Ninth Ward, Michael counts his tenure with Panorama as one of the life-changing episodes from his time here. In fact I believe Michael is Panorama's longest serving accordionist ever.

Like all the people I admire most, Michael is a highly skilled master of his craft yet also a down-to-earth, humble, good human being with a naughty sense of humor and the most virulent laugh I know. Michael recently quoted legendary New Orleans civil rights warrior and community activist Malik Rahim saying, "you don't live in New Orleans, New Orleans lives in you." And Michael lives in Panorama.

Thanks for listening,



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Credits:

Panorama Jazz Band

Ben Schenck - Clarinet

Aurora Nealand - Alto Saxophone

Charlie Halloran – Trombone

Michael Ward-Bergeman - Accordion

Mark Rubin - Tenor Banjo

Matt Perrine - Tuba

Simon Lott - Drum Set

Music Trad/PD

Arranged by Schenck, Nealand, Halloran, Ward-Bergeman, Rubin, Perrine, Lott

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