

April 14, 2009

Friday Night: DWNTWN Concert Series with Conjunto Progreso and Special Guest Arturo Sandoval

By Ben Thacker in [Concert Review](#)

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Conjunto Progreso w/ special guest Arturo Sandoval
Friday, April 10, 2009
Tina Hills Pavilion at Bayfront Park, Miami

Better Than: Badminton in Belarus.

Friday night marked the end of this year's Downtown Concert Series, the monthly happy-hour picnic event held at Bayfront Park's Tina Hills Pavilion. The series, sponsored by the Miami Downtown Development Authority, the John and James S. Knight Foundation and the Rhythm Foundation, brought acts like Rachel Goodrich, Jacob Jeffries, Afrobeta, Chana, the Spam Allstars and most recently Conjunto Progreso with special guest Arturo Sandoval. Friday night's show saw a noticeable rise in attendance, surprising even concert organizers, who promise next year's line up will be bigger and better.

The concert vibe in Bayfront Park is mellow and typically Miami. People from all walks of life gather to take in the music and the sunset, and to share the joys of living in this culture-laden Tropicalopolis. The band comes on and the rhythms start flowing. The people begin to dance.

Grammy-nominated Conjunto Progreso, often referred to as the Buena Vista Social Club of America, is a nine-piece traditional Cuban/Latin jazz outfit, with members from three generations of ultra-talented Cuban musicians. They were joined Friday night by Grammy Award-winning trumpet legend Arturo "el Maestro" Sandoval, who drew his own swarm of exuberant devotees. Also on stage was Miami's (semi) official music scene artist, LEBO, doing live painting/dancing, presumably inspired by the music.

When the sun goes down, the dancing picks up. The crowd moves up to the edge of the stage, pulsing with the deep tonal grooves of the upright bass and the bright blares of the trumpets. A warm sea breeze blows through the palm trees, blending cigar smoke and wine and perfume into one tantalizing aroma. The music becomes the people, and the people become the music. This is not South Beach. This is Miami. *¿Tu sabes?*

Critic's Notebook

Personal Bias: Afro-Cuban rhythms, Arturo, a ton of beautiful people?

Random Detail: The Crepe Maker was on the scene this time, feeding the hungry masses.

By the Way: Next season's concert series is set to begin in October 2009.