



Nicky Bomba's BUSTAMENTO "Intrepid Adventures to the Lost Riddim Islands"

Nicky Bomba is one of Australia's busiest and most highly respected musicians. He has built a solid reputation in the music industry via many projects including writing and performing with his band Bomba, conducting the Melbourne Ska Orchestra, playing drums on John Butler's award-winning "Sunrise over Sea" and "April Uprising" to being the Artistic Producer for the Multicultural Arts Victoria 'Visible' project. He has a discography of over a dozen albums and has been a composer/performer on many more.

Nicky Bomba has jumped on his musical boat again to deliver a party filled island adventure with his new band BUSTAMENTO. A tropical shaking six piece that pays homage to the upbeat rhythms of the Caribbean, covering the Calypso, Mento, Early Reggae and Ska styles.

And so the story goes...

While attending his first musical expo in Essen, Germany in 2003, Nicky's GPS ears stumbled upon a sound that put a smile on his face.

"I reached my destination and there before me was Stanley Beckford and his Mento group. The music had a happy familiarity. They were making words up on the spot and it immediately reminded me of my Maltese heritage where we would do the same thing. Island music eh?"

Nicky and Stanley talked together about the cheeky nature of the music style and how important it was to their musical legacy. Hooked on the sound it launched Nicky into the first part of his musical pilgrimage –Jamaica, tapping the source of the music he loved so much. Arriving alone with guitar in hand, Nicky found himself, within 24 hours, in a studio recording at the Twelve Tribes compound in Hope Rd, Kingston. Days later he was adopted into the Hendricks family from the hills of Christiana and immersed himself in the music and culture.

On returning to Australia, Nicky wanted to start a new band.

"Soon after arriving back home, I rang Barry and said I wanted to start a Mento group and he became a little giddy. We needed a name to kick it off and he mentioned Prince Buster, one of Jamaica's recording pioneers and I had just read that he was named after Alexander Bustamente, the island's first prime minister. It wasn't too long before one of us said Bustament..o?"

Bustamento. Sounded good, and for added value, a bustament in the Maltese language means "a very big boat". We love boats. There it was."

At the time, funk reggae outfit, BOMBA, was touring nationally and it seemed a natural organic flow to form the band with the same brothers. After sourcing some sweet old tunes they worked up a repertoire that developed into something really special. It was the type of band that could work at a totally acoustic level and still sound fantastic. The harmonies, the grooves, the fun element, the spontaneity, it all came together beautifully.

Intrepid Adventures to the Lost Riddim Islands, had begun. Nicky started writing songs that lent themselves perfectly to the genre and early this year (2012) the fruit was ripe for the picking.

"We really wanted to capture the essence of the music referencing all the good things we loved about the form. We realised that you have to play this music together in one room, soaking up all the harmonic overtones and energies that fly when a band that has been playing together a long time do their thing."

BUSTAMENTO called upon their good friend and award winning engineer Robin Mai and gave him the brief. He smiled and said "Old school eh? I mean real old school eh? Are you up for it?"

The band replied..."Hey buster... we'll kick it.. you just catch it!"

In what was a totally fun and inspiring experience, BUSTAMENTO recorded 23 songs in one weekend and realised they had something special... Jungle drums, sweet harmonies, banjos, ukuleles, double bass, piano, trumpets, saxophones, steel drums, mbiras, jazz guitars and a healthy dose of looseness was the order of the day. The band has an amazing chemistry and with brother Nicky And Michael side by side again, it was a winning combination.

"There's a thing that happens when you've been eating, living and playing music together for such a long time. We both love the happiness that music brings. We often stopped and said... 'Would Mum like this?' She's a bit of a party girl so we kept that in mind. Makin music with Barry, George and Paul has its own history via the Bomba and Overtones incarnations and that shines on this record. Peter, the relative newcomer, has added a wealth of talent and musicality that puts the icing on the cake. I'm really diggin these recordings and the fact that we tracked 23 songs in a week kinda says it all."

Some songs they developed a little further but the essence of the tunes had the spirit of the music that put the spring in their shoes. **Coconut Woman**, **Freeman** and the first single '**Mañana**' (pronounced Man-yana) pays tribute to some of the great classics. **Livin the Dream**, **Let's Start Again** and the classic mento form of **Deep Sleeper Man** Nicky wrote only recently when the vision became clearer. The grooves have been tried and tested already on energetic crowds across the nation.

Of the song writing experience Nicky states:

"Eternity (Gozitan Love Song) was another moment I realised there was a real connection with Maltese folklore and the island music I loved. I was shown a simpler version of these chords in an old cafe in Gozo (Malta) by an eccentric fisherman one summer afternoon. The vibe lifted, we set up a groove and made up lyrics on the spot. I carried these chords through my travels and eventually wrote the classic love tale while on tour with John Butler trio last year. Paul's performance was a first-take, never heard it before, piece of gold that created a scene in the studio because he wanted another go. We all said .. "Nah!.. that was it brother. Next song. " He eventually saw the light!"

Ghamillu Karta is an old Maltese folk tune BUSTAMENTO ska'd up and Nicky sang in the mother tongue. **Penny Drop** was the most recent composition about those moments when the universe goes "ping!". Wicked sax in that tune. **Soon Come** has a Motown feel but with enough feet in the ska camp to get a ticket.

"Hope you enjoy the album as much as we did making it. Its a happy leap of faith where we put the energy and love of the music up front and centre. BUSTAMENTO!"

Nicky recently received the highly prestigious Music Fellowship Award from Australia Council and this album is one of many planned under that banner. As conductor of the Melbourne Ska Orchestra, drummer for the John Butler Trio and now with BUSTAMENTO, the next couple of years spells an exciting time in his musical journey.

BUSTAMENTO ARE:

Nicky Bomba – Vocals, Guitars, Percussion / Barry Deenick – Double Bass, Vocals / Paul Coyle – Trumpet, Vocals / George Servanis – Percussion, Vocals / Michael Caruana – Piano / Peter Mitchell – Saxophone

The debut single, Mañana, is available now
"Intrepid Adventures to the Lost Riddim Islands" is due for release May 14, 2012
Through Transmitter Music & Vitamin Distribution

***All quotes lifted from 'The Story of Bustamento', written by Nicky Bomba under a coconut tree in Bali

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