



One of the most notable musicians to come from the Dominican Republic is singer, songwriter, activist and philanthropist — Juan Luis Guerra. He began his career in music in 1984, with a group called Juan Luis Guerra y 440. Together the group released 11 studio albums (and counting) and received numerous awards, including two Grammy's. Guerra is recognized for his lyrical dexterity and intellectual commentary. His distinct sound and voice are known and respected internationally. Simply put, the maestro is a lyrical genius.

Juan Luis Guerra Seijas was born in Santo Domingo on June 7th, 1957. He began his studies at the Universidad Autonoma de Santo Domingo where he studied philosophy and literature. However, he soon changed his course of study and decided that music was his vocation. He completed his study at the Conservatorio Nacional de Musica and then decided to continue his education in the United States at the Berklee College of Music in Boston. There, a chance encounter with a design student named Nora Vega, would bring Guerra his future wife, muse and mother of his two children.

After his time at Berklee ended, Guerra returned to the Dominican Republic and formed his now famous group. In 1990, he released *Bachata Rosa* his most successful album to date. The Grammy award winning release included classics like “Burbujas de Amor” and “Estrellitas y Duendes”. His next album *Areito* showcased his political inclinations. The single “El Costo de La Vida,” focused on the deplorable conditions in many Latin American countries and spoke frankly about the downside of capitalism. That same year, Guerra formed the Juan Luis Guerra Foundation to benefit disabled children.

In 1995, Guerra briefly retired from music to focus on his family and personal growth. The following year, he converted to Christianity. In 1998, he returned to music and released *No es lo Mismo, ni es igual* which was followed by his first faith based album *Para Ti*.

Juan Luis Guerra has created captivating tunes and both socially conscious and astoundingly romantic lyrics in several different languages for more than a quarter of a century. His unique blend of traditional Latin genres (i.e. merengue, salsa and bachata), contemporary sounds and topics set him apart from many and place him in a category reserved for only the best musicians. —