

# A NEW MEANING TO THE WORD 'ECHO'



deborah  
MAGDALENA  
sama

latin  
street

**Definition 1** — *ECHO*: a repetition of sound produced by the reflection of sound waves from a wall, a mountain ...

This Boricua (Puerto Rican) producer Paul Irizarry, aka Echo, has done just that, produced sound waves around the world.

I found it curious that this three-time Latin Grammy Award winner — best producer and engineer for Vico C's (EMI Int'l) album "En Honor a la Verdad" and for Daddy Yankee's (UMG) 2004 multi-platinum album "Barrio Fino" — a 10-year veteran of the reggaeton/Latin hip-hop game, was just now becoming press-friendly.

"I wanted my success to speak for itself," Echo says. "I'm also a very skeptical person; I can't depend on others to give me my due credit."

He also pointed something out that is so true and so sad.

"In the Latin market, they don't respect producers like in the American market. In the Anglo market they recognize the importance of a good producer for the success of any artist. Latinos? They see the long hours away from our family and all of our personal sacrifices to produce them a hot track as our duty. They really need to start recognizing."

Amen to that, *nene!*

Echo began playing the piano at 5 years old. Once, his dad gave him a Casio keyboard where the keys would light up so you can follow in order to play a melody. His first self-taught song? "Eye of the Tiger." Showing his Rocky Balboa champion skills, he learned all of his Casio tunes in less than a month.

His first exposure to hip-hop was, like most of us, Run-D.M.C., Rakim & Eric B, Black Sheep ... he got the fever for the flavor.

"I knew I needed to hear more and learn more about this music," says Echo.

He upgraded to a new keyboard that had a four-bar loop and only 36 sounds. With a tape recorder in hand, a producer was born.

"Although I started out as a musician, a pianist, during my rebellious teenage years I lost my musical discipline," Echo says. "But I never lost my love for music. So I first and foremost consider myself a producer."

Cleverly seeing there was a shortage of hip-hop studios and a demand for them in Puerto Rico, Echo and producing partner Diesel opened a state-of-the-art recording studio in San Juan called The Lab Studios.

Today known as one of the top, if not



PAUL IRIZARRY aka ECHO

THE No. 1 studio, it houses Echo's dream team of engineers, songwriters and producers — The BeatSlappers.

This very serious "beat slapper" has produced beats, recorded and mixed tracks and albums for international, multi-platinum and award-winning artists like: Tego Calderón, Ricky Martin, Nina Sky, Don Omar, Nicolás Tovar, Obie Bermúdez, Jadakiss, Baby Ranks, Fat Joe, Tony Touch, Pitbull, La India, Bounty Killer, Beenie Man, Wayne Wonder, Wiziz & Yandel, Voltio, Baby Rasta, Hector "El Father" and many more.

Believing in this genre when no one else did, Echo was savvy enough to record with urban Latino pioneers Tempo and Ivy Queen. He produced a promo compilation CD for the magazine *In Da House* which featured these artists. Quickly, word spread of his talent and his professional ethics, which continue to drive him to work on productions day and night. This is why it was a natural decision to name his record company *Insomnio, Inc.*

"I never imagined myself collaborating or producing with such stars like Ricky Martin or Beenie Man," he said. "Especially ever winning Grammys. I just wanted to do what I love to do. Music. It was never about the money. Still, today, I like to work on projects that I believe in. It's important that we producers evolve this urban genre, it's not just about a loop, we need to make music first. True urban music is, or at least should be, blends of R&B, reggae, jazz and hip-hop. Sometimes even a little

rock 'n' roll, even classical. If it's a hit, and rocks the party — that's a plus. But it has to be good music first."

## CLASSICAL?

**Definition 2** — *ECHO*: a sympathetic or identical response, as to sentiments expressed.

Classical!

Echo and partner Diesel flew to London to record at Abbey Road studios with the London Symphony Orchestra, on the track "Porque soy Tempo," part of the "FREE TEMPO" album.



His echoing sentiments of gratitude and friendship have driven him to solidify his bond with reggaeton pioneer David Sánchez Badillo, aka "Tempo," by joining the FREE TEMPO movement. At a time when Urban Latin Music was not even envisioned, Tempo's first two albums "Game Over" and "New Game" were certified Gold by the Recording Industry Association of America. Not only was Tempo one of the very first artists to work with Echo, but Tempo defined himself as an articulate spokesperson for

the dispossessed. He is idolized in the urban Latino community, much like Tupac and Biggie are.

Unfortunately, Tempo was incarcerated on a 2002 charge and then later convicted, on circumstantial evidence, of conspiracy to distribute drugs.

"It really wasn't till my work with Tempo blew up that the streets knew my name," Echo says. "That is something I will never forget and will always appreciate."

(For more info [www.freetempo.org](http://www.freetempo.org))

**Definition 3 — ECHO:** a lingering effect

What new reverb will Echo make next? A loud one.

With the success of the Tego Calderon & Don Omar track called "Bandoleros," which was

included in the soundtrack for the movie "The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift," Hollywood has been knockin' on his door, wanting Echo's help with other soundtracks and film scores.

His much-anticipated compilation CD "Invasion," featuring Fat Joe, Pitbull, Hector "El Father" and the who's who of this Latino-flavored genre has everyone bumpin'.

Artists and labels continue to have him on their cell phone speed dial, waiting in line to work with him on their new albums. Some of these include the likes of the West Coast-based Salvadoran brothers, Crooked Stilo (FONOUSA) and the Cuban hip-hop trio Orishas (UNIVERSAL).

With all of these successful projects, and so many more pending, performance rights organization SESAC must be ecstatic that they were

able to recently exclusively pen this hit-making producer and his hit-making partner Diesel.

"We are particularly proud that Echo and Diesel have selected SESAC as their organization to represent their interests in protecting and promoting their music in regards to performance rights" said J.J. Cheng, senior director of SESAC Latina.

You damn right you are!

Personally, this was one of my most interesting and profound interviews to date. We both appreciated each other's professionalism and musical knowledge — something which should be an automatic for any successful producer or good writer, but tragically in this industry most movers and shakers lack.

Can you echo that?

## JULY'S ECHOING EVENTS

### SURE TO ECHO CONCERTS

Si\*Se

Friday, July 13, 8 p.m.

Studio A, 60 NE 11th St., Downtown Miami  
[www.studioamiami.com](http://www.studioamiami.com)

Morrissey

Saturday, July 14, 8 p.m.

Mizner Park Amphitheater, 590 Plaza Real, Boca Raton  
[www.miznerparkamp.com](http://www.miznerparkamp.com) or [www.fabrikalink.com](http://www.fabrikalink.com)

La Mala Rodriguez

Wednesday July 18, 9 p.m.

Templo, 619 Washington Ave., Miami Beach

**MUST ECHO OUT!!!**

You have heard me write about her, talk about her and praise Spain's Lauren Hill — now here is your chance to see, hear and witness what I've been blabbin' about!  
[www.fabrikalink.com](http://www.fabrikalink.com)



### ECHOING CLUB NIGHTS

Saturday nights at PS14 is "Noches de Fabrika"

28 NE 14th St.  
Downtown Miami

Thursday, July 5 at 10 p.m.

Celebrating Independencia de Venezuela — Live performance by Bachaco



Thursday, July 19 at 10 p.m.

Concrete Rebels (special guest DJ Alesouljah)  
Reggae in Spanish & English  
[www.nochesdefabrika.com](http://www.nochesdefabrika.com)

DJ Sama's Echo Deafening MEGA Birthday Bash

Saturday, July 28 at 10 p.m.

**MUST ECHO OUT!!!**

Keep it locked to MEGA 94.9, MEGA FLO MORNING SHOW 6-10 a.m. for party details and confirmed celebrity guests.  
[www.mega949.com](http://www.mega949.com)

Café Iguana

Every Wednesday Night is Latin Night at 9 p.m.

8358 Pines Blvd., Hollywood

Ladies drink free all night! LIVE filming of weekly show Iguana TV f

or GEN TV (channel 8)

[www.cafeiguanapines.com](http://www.cafeiguanapines.com)

A Poetic Echo - SNL

Every Sunday - Sunday Night Live 8 p.m.

7920 Pines Blvd., Pembroke Pines

Open Mic & Featured Artist Showcase

For info, e-mail [grassroots3000@yahoo.com](mailto:grassroots3000@yahoo.com)

### ECHOING FESTIVALS

Sunday, July 8 from noon to 11 p.m.

Festival Argentino de Miami at The Grounds

Sunday, July 15 from noon to 11 p.m.

Peruvian Independence Day Festival

Outdoors & The Blue Ribbon Room

Fair Expo

Tamiami Park

10901 Coral Way

Miami

Sunday, July 22

from noon to 11 p.m.

Columbian Independence Day

Festival -

Outdoors

& The Blue Ribbon Room

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Performance by Tercera Vizion,

a psychedelic urban experience,

as they share the stage with

bachata supergroup Aventura,

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Don't forget your sunblock!

