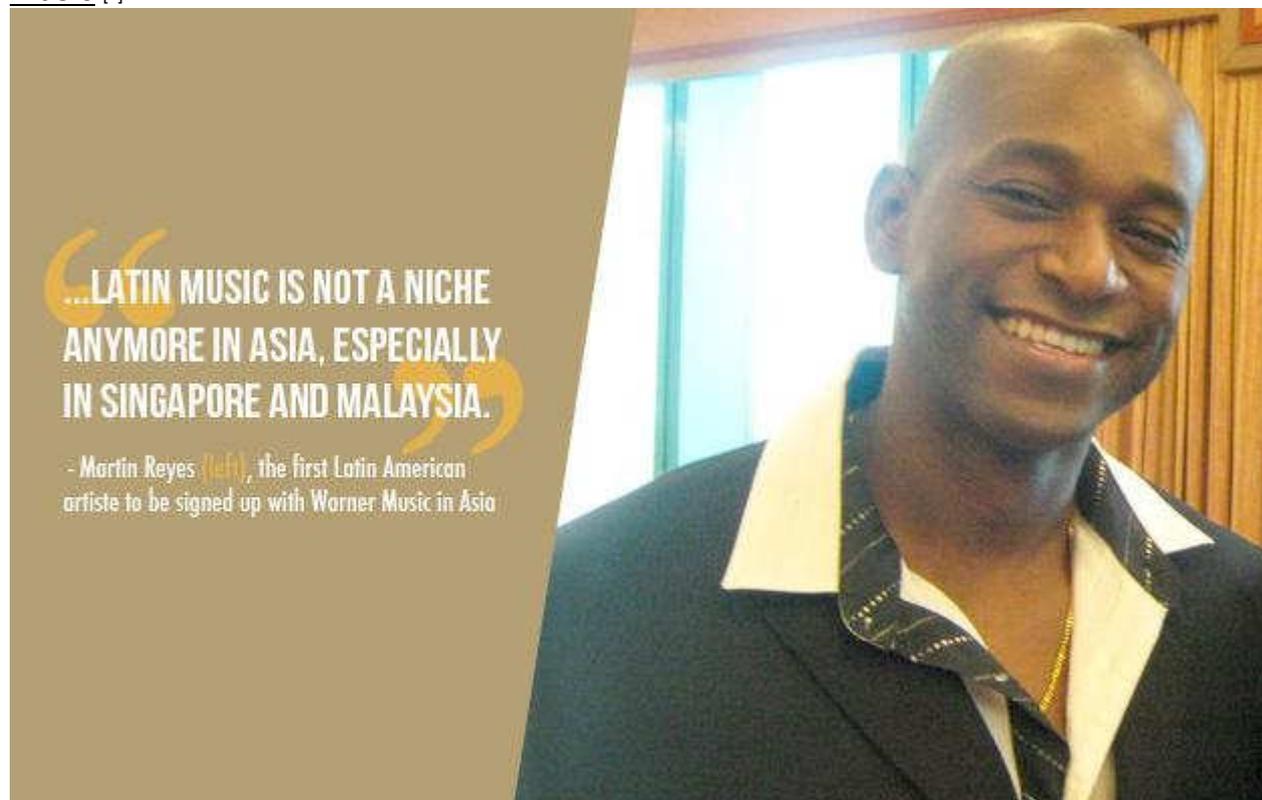


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Warner Music's 1st Latin Singer in Asia [2]

Martin Elias Reyes has achieved a feat unheard of in Asia and in the world - until now. He is the first Latin American artiste to be signed up with Warner Music in Asia, a sign of the growing interest in Latin music in Asia. The 36-year-old singer has an impressive repertoire of past performances in Latin America, USA, Europe and Asia from a young age, and has worked for famous bands in Venezuela and Colombia like Los Ineditos, Sonora Cartagena and Manhattan, spreading his talent to multitudes at many salsa and music festivals. Martin, who now stays in Singapore and was interviewed by 938 Live radio on 18 December 2012, shares with us his journey and his debut album, *Unstoppable*.

What made you decide to relocate to Singapore?

I have been in Singapore for almost two years now. Previously, I was living in Malaysia so I used to come down to Singapore very often every year, most of the time during weekends. I decided to move and stay in this country, and ultimately got my PR.

When did first start your music career?

When I started playing music at the age of 9, it was just for fun because I love it! Later, it became serious. I studied music and one of my teachers was Mr Osvaldo Morales who gave me vocal lessons when I was 16 years old.

Is this the career path you intended all your life?

Yes. It is impossible to quit music as it's in my blood. It is part of my personality.

What was the first song you wrote and sang, and what was it about?

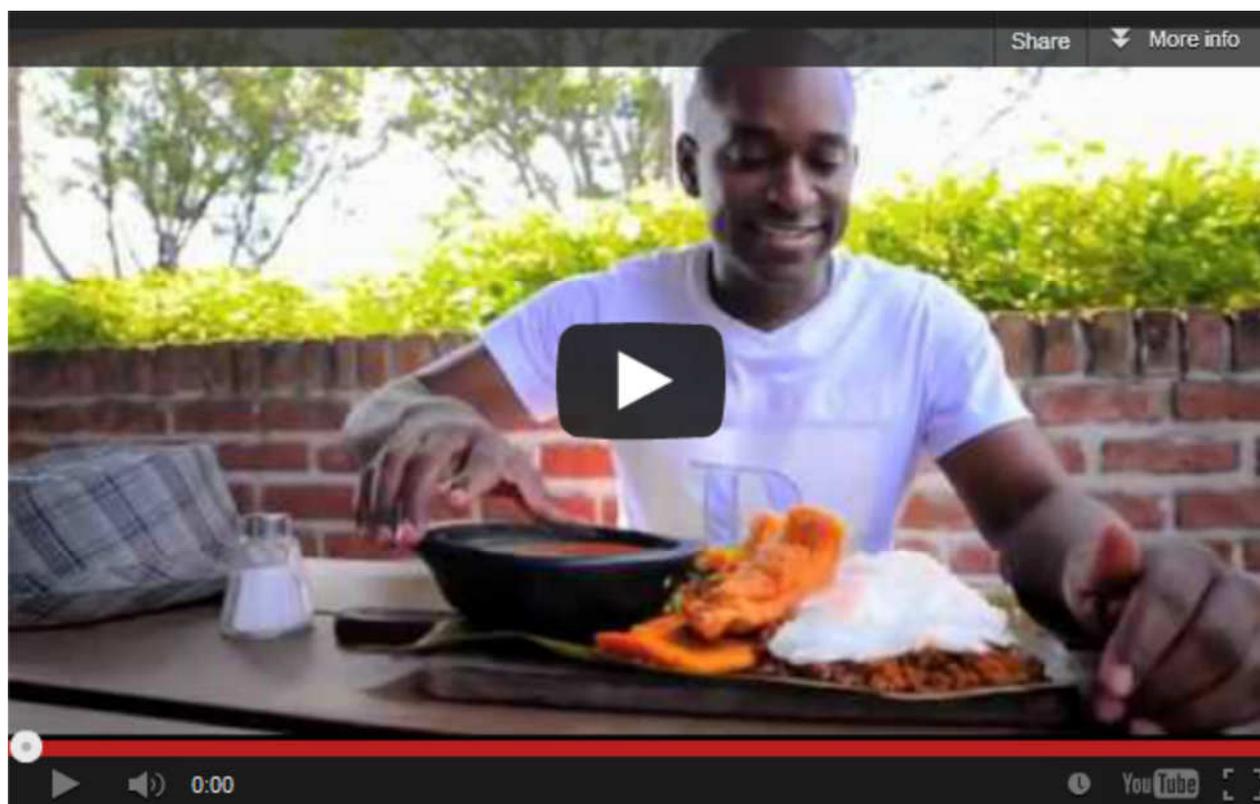
Wow! I did not think of it for so many years! Well, the first song that I composed was called 'Quiero' which means 'I' in Spanish. It's kinda like "I want" or "I would like to". It was a romantic Salsa song that goes "*Quiero que comprendas como yo te Quiero , Quiero que comprendas como yo te amo Quiero que in día pienses en lo que yo te quise para que recapacites y decidas volver a mi*" (translation: I want you to understand how much I want you, I want you to understand that I love you, I hope one day that you will want to come to me). (Laughs) I was 14 years old then. I recorded it in Venezuela a long time ago so I can't even remember the lyrics!

Describe your music style.

My music style is Latin Music. I play very happy kinds of Latin music like Salsa, Merengue, Bachata, Reggae, Cha-Cha, Latin pop... almost all kinds in my shows. Some of the rhythms in Latin Music are very typical but we can't play them here yet because they have not been introduced to Asia. In some countries in South America, music like joropo, gaitas or even vallenato are common. There are people in Asia who listen to such music inside their cars or houses, but these rhythms are still not very popular in Asia.

Who are your biggest influences in your music?

My biggest influence is my older brother Erasmo Reyes. When I was maybe 7 or 8 years old, I remembered him singing a Salsa song from Willie Colon and Hector Lavoe with his friends in my house. He's not a singer but the way they enjoyed and sang that song stuck in my mind.



Which is your favourite song in your debut album Unstoppable and why?

(Laughs) All the songs in the album are my favourite since it's my first album in Asia. I thank God that I am part of this in history as the first Latin American in Asia who is signed up with one of the biggest music companies in the world. Anytime that I get to listen to any of the songs in the future, I will be so happy and full of memories.

How is it like being the only Latin American artiste signed up to Warner Music in Asia?

It is very nice but also a challenge. Now I need to prove that they did not make a mistake signing me up and that Latin music is not a niche anymore in Asia, especially in Singapore and Malaysia. I have to prove it by getting the album to sell. It's hard with so much piracy these days but I still trust my friends that they will buy the album and not copy it. I hope the people who love real Latin music will understand that this album has many implications in

the type of music that we like, and that is Salsa.

So how were you approached by Warner Music to begin with?

Actually, it was vice versa. One of my very good friends that I call him my bro (his name is "Rudy") asked me for a sample and he show that sample to the CEO of Warner music, and he liked it even though he was not familiar with Salsa or Bachata. We were so happy. Thank God! It gave me the feeling that we were right in choosing the songs and making the arrangement because for someone who is not familiar with this sort of music and its rhythm, he still decided to give me a chance.

What is the most important thing that you want to achieve among your listeners when they hear your songs?

I would like to continue increasing and sustaining their interest towards this genre of music.



What are your thoughts about the Latin music industry in Singapore and South East Asia as a whole?

In Singapore and many other Asian countries, Salsa music is commonly played. When you go to coffee outlets and sit there for a while to have a meeting or a drink, you hear it. It's so common yet nobody notices it. It's like it is already accepted but it still has no support from radio stations or TV. It'll be good to see which radio station will be the first to air Salsa music, or which TV channel will have a full program on Latin music. It will be interesting to see the reaction from the crowd.

When people in Singapore first hear that you are from Latin America, what are some of the common thoughts or misconceptions they have of Latinos?

I think there are no misconceptions or at least I have been one of the lucky ones to have that impression because the first thing they asked me was if I knew how to dance. Others started speaking a few words in Spanish with me and they let me know that they were learning Spanish. It's very popular that you can't imagine. Also, some of them asked me about football while others asked how romantic and passionate we Latinos are. A few ladies even told me that being Latino made me very sexy! Seriously, I feel very lucky and very blessed.

Your plans for 2013?

We are working on my new album and getting it ready before Christmas in 2013, so we are going to record many different types of Latin songs in my new album. I also intent to hire an agent or engage a talent agency in Singapore to sell my shows all over Asia this year. This way, I can introduce to the audience many more types of dynamic Latin music that we normally play in parties, private events and weddings. I will also try to get a Radio station to play some of my songs, or plan weekly programs about Latin music on the radio or TV. We hope to educate more people about Latin music this 2013.

Visit Martin Reyes' website at <http://martinreyesmr.com/> [3]

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