

**The**  
**GUITAR**  
**of**  
**RUBEN LOPEZ FÜRST**  
**“BABY”**

Born: Buenos Aires, June 26, 1937  
 Died: July 25, 2000

*Introduction:*

There are several good reasons for this solo-graphy. First of all, Argentinian jazz guitar is not 'only' Oscar Aleman; there have through the years been numerous great performers based mainly in Buenos Aires. In fact Argentina has been a real jazz country since the vintage thirties, and serious collectors know very well alternate takes of famous US sessions issued on Argentinian 78 rpm.s. Another reason stems from my visits down there several years ago, allowing me to meet with enthusiastic artists and collectors. Finally, I had the pleasure to meet in person Hector Lopez Fürst, the leader of The Blue Strings, resulting in a visit to Oslo and performance at the Django Festival. I never met Ruben, and I know he was better known as a brilliant jazz pianist, but I find his guitar playing in The Blue Strings so nice, that a solo-graphy simply ran out of my computer.

## **A brief biography of Rubén López Furst**

By Andrés "Tito" Liber

The argentinian jazzman Rubén Lopez Furst (or Fürst) was born in Buenos Aires, July 26 1937.

From the age of 5 he studied music and piano, being very soon attracted to jazz.

In 1951, a 14-year-old young Ruben "Baby" (called "baby" by the other musicians because he was a child!) made his debut on the jazz scene by performing at the concerts organized by the "Hot Club de Buenos Aires".

The earliest notice of Baby playing in a string ensemble comes from the summer of 1953, when a group led by the López Furst brothers performed in a jazz concert at the Provincial Hotel, in the city of Mar del Plata (Argentina). It is not clear, but maybe Baby had played guitar.

With his brother Héctor on banjo, Baby integrated the "Hot Jammers" group between 1954 and 1955, participating as pianist in two 78-single records for Victor. Between 1956 and 1957, always playing piano, he was part of the Dixie band "The Picking Up Timers" (in fact, a traditional Chicago-style jazz ensemble), together again with his brother Héctor on guitar. The line-up was: Carlos Constantini (tp), Beto Wassington (cl), A. Ferramosca (ts), J. Rey (tb), B. Lopez Furst (p), Hector Lopez Furst (g), G. de León (db), J. Cichero (dm). The band made a Long Play for the Vik label in 1957.

In 1957, he recorded 4 tracks in an LP for Columbia, with a quartet led by clarinetist Edmond Hall. Edmond Hall Quartet: Edmond Hall (cl), Rubén López Fürst (p), Jorge López Fürst (db), Pichi Mazzei (dm).

Modern jazz captivated him in 1959, when he listened to Gerry Mulligan at the "Hot Club de Montevideo", in Uruguay. On the piano, Baby always recognized two primary influences: Teddy Wilson and Bill Evans.

Trying to play those new sounds, in 1962 he joined the modern group of pianist Sergio Mihanovich. On the two albums recorded in 1962, the work that began argentine *cool jazz*, participated... saxophonist Gato Barbieri! Line-up: Sergio Mihanovich (p), Osvaldo "Pichi" Mazzei (dm), Leandro "Gato" Barbieri (sx), Rubén Barbieri (tp), Oscar López Ruiz (electric g), Rubén López Furst (p), Domingo Cura (percussion), Osvaldo Bissio (vibráfono), Julio Darré (sx barítono).

After a few years as a jam musician of the Hot Club de Buenos Aires, in 1957 the big succes of Oscar Alemán inspired Baby to leave the piano and take up the guitar, trying to emulate one of his idols: Django Reinhardt. Then began regular performances with a string-group named the "Blue Strings".

It was a quartet in the vein of gypsy string swing but with one less guitar. The leader of the group this time it was his brother, the great violinist Héctor López Furst (who in the 1970s would integrate the excellent "Swing 39" string-ensemble with guitarist Walter Malosetti). In fact, the star in most of the recordings "is" the

violin, but surrounded by excellent musicians, and a very good work of the first guitar.

The two guitarists played Selmer-like guitars, made by Argentine luthiers. For instance, the guitar of Carlos Macri was made by luthier Luis Malossetti, brother of guitarist Walter. Sergio Repiso was another luthier who made Selmer replicas.

The standard personnel of the group were the three friends who played together since 1953: Héctor López Furst (v), Rubén Baby López Furst (lead g), and Enrique "Quique" Gutiérrez de León (db). The rhythm guitarist alternated: first Carlos "Cacho" Macri, then Carlos Parera, and finally Bernardo Birenbaum. Sometimes, the group also performed as a quintet with drummer Jorge Cichero (from the Picking Up Timers), with the bizarre name "The Truskas Fice".

It is interesting the history of Carlos "Cacho" Macri. He played in "The Hot Jammers" during 1956, and with the "Dixieland Reminders" later. When Louis Armstrong visited Argentina in 1957, Macri (20 years old) accompanied him live on guitar! After playing with the Blue Strings, when in 1964 he achieved his medical degree, he went to the United States, leaving music behind. He became chief of Pneumology in the Children Hospital of Buenos Aires.

The quartet began its professional career in 1957 with live performances in a midday TV show at Channel 7, in Buenos Aires. Then they presented every Monday night at the jazz-concerts organized by the Hot Club de Buenos Aires. The popular success led them to record two LPs in 1965 and 1966. It was famous their performance in the 1960s at the lecture hall of the Faculty of Economics of the University of Buenos Aires. The Blue Strings played regularly for more than a decade until 1975.

The delicate, calm, complex and almost intellectual style of Rubén Furst on the piano, contrasts with the hot sound of his work as swing guitarist. He was not Oscar Alemán, but he made a remarkable work as first guitar. The guitar player seemed to be an alter ego of Baby.

In 1966 Rubén returned to the piano. He put together a trio at the *Jamaica* nightclub of Buenos Aires with Jorge González on double bass and Néstor Astarita on drums. They remained together for nineteen years and recorded two albums (issued with remastered sound by "Meloepa" label) between 1966 and 1967.

After a period when he played as pianist in various combos, he returned to the guitar in the early 1970s, as a member of a modern electric quartet led by his brother, Hector Lopez Furst. Baby played there electric guitar, Héctor played electric violin (as Jean Luc Ponty), and Carlos López Furst double bass. The group was called "Quartet" or "Quintet López Furst" (depending on the other members). The other member was drummer Norberto Minichillo. The drummers Néstor Astarita, Eduardo Casalla and Luis Cerávoló, the guitarist Bernardo Birenbaum, and the bassist Enrique Gutierrez de León participated alternately. The group became a quintet with Néstor Scaglione on rhythm guitar.

It was a pioneer group in the musical line of fusion in Argentina, interpreting not only jazz songs, but bossa nova and rock. They performed many concerts in Buenos Aires from 1971 to early 1980s

From the middle 1980s onwards he initiated a tremendous career as piano soloist, recording albums with almost every recognized jazzmen of Argentina. Rubén formed an incredible duo with other excellent jazz pianist, Jorge Navarro, recording many CDs in the 1990s (one is a beautiful homage to George Gershwin).

The narrow market of Argentina forced many musicians of that time – as well as today – to find alternate sources of income. Baby made advertising jingles for the promo-clips of cars. His contact with advertising music was through director Pino Solanas' company. Pino used to whistle the music and Baby wrote it. He also made the music for Argentine films soundtracks: "El faro", "Sol de otoño", "Espérame mucho", "El desquite", and "Asesinato en el Senado de la Nación".

Baby López Furst received the prestigious "Konex" award as best Argentine jazz soloist in 1985, 1995 and 2005 (post-mortem). He was a director, composer, one of the greatest jazz pianists of Argentina and a proper swing/fusion guitarist. He played and recorded with great jazzmen as Roy Eldridge, John Lewis, Louis Armstrong, Kenny Dorham, Jim May, Bud Shank, Joe Newman and Hemeto Pascoal.

Baby died on July 26, 2000 from a brain stroke.

## RUBEN LOPEZ FÜRST GUITAR SOLOGRAPHY

**THE BLUE STRINGS** **Buenos Aires, Nov. 10, 1958**  
 Hector Lopez Fürst (vln), Ruben Lopez Fürst (solo g), Carlos Macri (g), Enrique Gutierrez de Leon (b).  
 One title was recorded live at the “Arena” Circus-Theatre for Vik LZ1013, issued as “Hot en la carpa”:

Undecided Solo 64 bars. (FM)

Comments later.

**THE BLUE STRINGS** **Buenos Aires, Nov. 11, 1960**  
 Personnel as above.  
 One title was recorded live at the “Arena” theatre for Opus OL7004, issued as “Hot Jazz – Cincierto anual del Hot Club de Buenos Aires”:

Miss Annabelle Lee Solo 64 bars. (FM)

Comments later.

**THE BLUE STRINGS** **Buenos Aires, probably Dec. 1964**  
 Hector Lopez Fürst (vln), Ruben Lopez Fürst (solo g), Carlos Macri, Carlos Parera, Walter Malosetti (rhythm g), Carlos Constantini (b).  
 Twelve titles were recorded for Record R2014:

Swingin’ With Django	Duet with (vln) 32 bars to solo 32 bars. Duet 32 bars. (FM)
Stardust	Soli 32 and 4 bars. (SM)
Sweet Georgia Brown	Soli 32 and 8 bars. (FM)
Out Of Nowhere	Intro to solo 32 bars. Soli 16 and 4 bars. Coda. (M)
Night And Day	Soli 8 and 16 bars. (FM)
Full Moon And Empty Arms	Solo 32 bars. (M)
Lady Be Good	Soli 8, 32, 8 and 8 bars. (FM)
Si Tu Savais	Solo 32 bars. Coda. (S)
There’ll Never Be Another You	Soli 32, 4 and 4 bars. (FM)
Minor Swing	Break to solo 48 bars. Soli 4 and 6 bars. (FM)
Limehouse Blues	Soli 32, 8 and 8 bars. (FM)
Autumn Leaves	Soli 8, 16 and 8 bars. (M)

Comments later.

**THE BLUE STRINGS** **Buenos Aires, 1960-61**  
 Hector Lopez Fürst (vln), Ruben Lopez Fürst (solo g), Bernardo Birenbaum (rhythm g), Enrique Gutierrez de Leon (b).  
 Six titles were recorded live at Teatro Buenos Aires, unissued, not available.

**THE BLUE STRINGS** **Buenos Aires, Aug. 6, 1966**  
 Hector Lopez Fürst (vln), Ruben Lopez Fürst (solo g), Bernardo Birenbaum (rhythm g), Jorge “Negro” Gonzalez (b).  
 Six titles were recorded live at Colegio Marianista, unissued, not available.

**THE BLUE STRINGS** **Buenos Aires, Sept. 7, 8, 12&-16, 1966**  
 Hector Lopez Fürst (vln), Ruben Lopez Fürst (solo g), Bernardo Birenbaum (rhythm g), Enrique Gutierrez de Leon (b).  
 Eight titles were recorded for Trova TL5, issued as “Gipsy”:

Minor Swing	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (FM)
You Go To My Head	Duet with (vln) 40 bars to solo 40 bars. (SM)
Just In Time	Solo 64 bars. (F)
Alabamy Bound	Solo 64 bars. (F)
Eveline	Soli 64, 8, 4 and 4 bars. (FM)

The Gipsy	Soli 8 and 32 bars. (S)
If I Were A Bell	Soli 32 and 64 bars. (FM)
Nice Work If You Can Get It	Duet with (vln) 32 bars to solo 32 bars. Duet 32 bars. (M)

Comments later.

**CUARTETO LOPEZ FURST** **Buenos Aires, July 15&29, 1972**  
 Hector Lopez Fürst (electric vln), Ruben Lopez Fürst (electric g), Carlos Lopez Fürst (b), Norberto Minichillo (dm).  
 Six titles were recorded at Phonalex for Opus Jazz OJC 20009, issued as “Oliendo Los Blues”, not available.

No further recordings.

## Discography of Baby López Furst as guitarist

By Andrés “Tito” Liber

1958. Various artists. LP *Hot en la carpa* (Vik LZ1013)

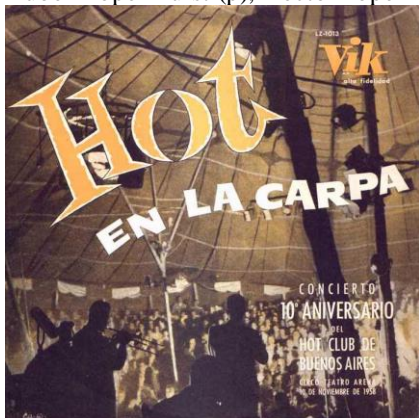
(Note: the Vik label, created in 1955, was a subsidiary of RCA)

Recorded live at the “Arena” Circus-Theater. Buenos Aires, Nov. 10, 1958. 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Hot Club de Buenos Aires.

The Dixielanders, Saint Louis Stompers, The Jesters, New Seven Pennies, The Georgians Jazz Band, Blue Strings, Dixieland Smugglers, The Picking Up Timers, Orquesta del Hot Club de Buenos Aires + words of Jorge Cichero.

Side 2, track 1: *Undecided* (Blue Strings). Personnel: Rubén López Furst (g), Héctor López Furst (v), Carlos Macri (rhythm g), Enrique Gutiérrez de León (db).

Side 2, track 3: *St. Louis Blues* (The Picking Up Timers) Personnel: Carlos Constantini (tp), Alberto “Beto” Wassington (cl), A. Ferramosca (ts), J. Rey (tb), Rubén Lopez Furst (p), Hector Lopez Furst (g), G. de León (db), J. Cichero (dm).



1961. Various artists. LP *Hot Jazz. Concierto anual del Hot Club de Buenos Aires* (Opus OL7004) (re-issue: Opus OJC 20006)

Recorded live at the “Arena” theater. Buenos Aires, November 11, 1960. 13<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Hot Club de Buenos Aires.

Engineer: Dr. Federico Steube

Record Technician: José Cortés, José Soler

Cover design: Carlos Constantini

Blue Strings, Picking Up Timers, Christian Kellens, Davenport Five, Dixieland Six, Kansas City Stompers, Octeto Argentino de Jazz, Quintet Highbrow School, St. Louis Stompers, The New Blue Five.

Baby played guitar with the Blue Strings and piano with the Picking Up Timers.

Side 1, track 4: *Un jarro de cerveza* (A mug of ale) (Venuti-Lang) (Quintet Highbrow School) Personnel: Héctor López Furst (v), E. Mayer (sx bajo), C. Balmaceda (p), A. Pérez Estévez (g), R. Moyano (dm).

Side 2, track 1: *Miss Annabelle Lee* (Clare-Pollack) (Blue Strings) Personnel: Rubén López Furst (g), Héctor López Furst (v), Carlos Macri (rhythm g), Enrique Gutiérrez de León (db).

Side 3, track 5: *En el baile de la Jazz Band* (La Rocca-Shields) (The Picking Up Timers) Personnel: Carlos Constantini (tp), Beto Wassington (cl), A. Ferramosca (ts), J. Rey (tb), Rubén Lopez Furst (p), Hector Lopez Furst (g), G. de León (db), J. Cichero (dm).



Original issue - Re-issue

1965. Los Blue Strings. LP *Swing y más swing con los Blue Strings* (Record R2014)(Argentina).

Recorded at ION studios, Buenos Aires, probably by the end of 1964 (December). In one day (the complete session lasted three hours).

Mono

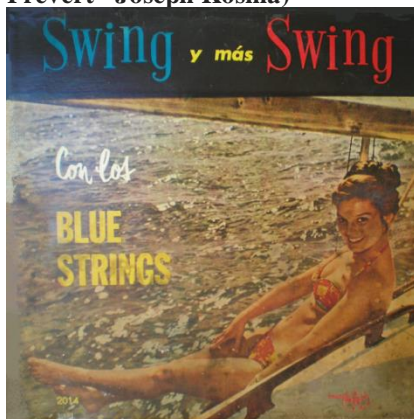
The debut LP was recorded with the technical advice of director Waldo de los Ríos. Waldo made some changes, placing a microphone in the first guitar to improve his sound. It was a novelty in those times, because they used to record with only one micro for all the musicians.

Personnel: Baby López Furst (lead g), Héctor López Furst (v), Enrique “Quique” Gutiérrez de León (db), Carlos Parera (rhythm g), Carlos Macri (rhythm g).

Though his name is in the back-cover of the LP, in all these recordings Gutiérrez de León was replaced in the doublebass by Carlos Constantini (a well known trumpeter of the time, member of the Picking Up Timers, and friend of the Lopez Furst brothers). Also, Walter Malosetti played a fifth guitar in the album, to make stronger the rhythm. So, the quartet became a quintet for this album.

Lado A: *Noche y día* (Night and Day) (Cole Porter) – *Luna llena y brazos vacíos* (Full Moon and Empty Arms) (Buddy Kaye - Ted Mossman) – *Señora sea buena* (Lady Be Good) (George Gershwin) – *Si tu supieras* (Si tu savais) (George Ulmer) – *Fuera de la nada* (Out of Nowhere) (Johnny Green - Edward Heyman) – *Polvo de estrellas* (Stardust) (Hoagy Carmichael).

Lado B: *Dulce Georgia Brown* (Sweet Georgia Brown) (Ben Bern - Maceo Pincard - Kenneth Casey) – *No habrá otra como tú* (There'll Never Be Another You) (Harry Warren - Mack Gordon) – *Swing en menores* (Minor Swing) (Django Reinhardt - Stéphane Grappelli) – *Limelhouse Blues* (Douglas Furber - Philip Braham) – *Haciendo swing con Django* (Swinging with D) (Django Reinhardt) – *Las hojas muertas* (Autumn Leaves / Les feuilles mortes) (Jacques Prévert - Joseph Kosma)



CD *The Blue Strings en concierto 1960-1966 vol. 1 & 2*

Private recordings. Not a commercial issue

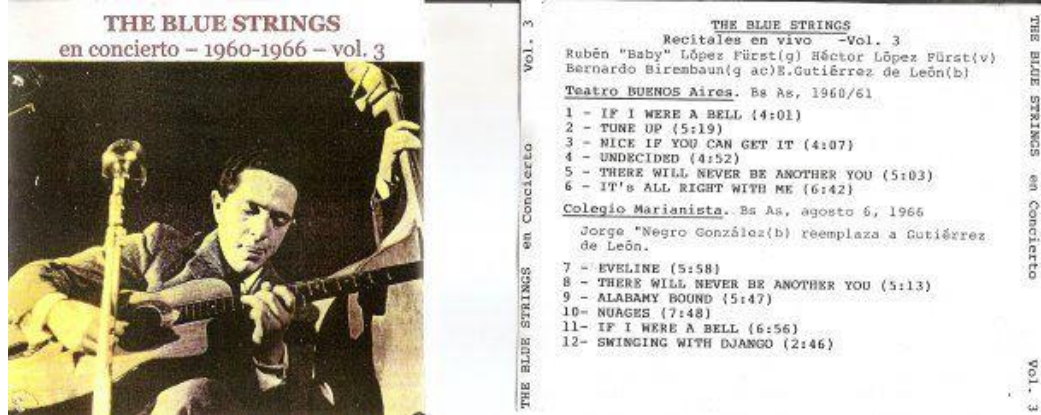
Unknown tracks

CD *The Blue Strings en concierto 1960-1966 vol. 3*

Private recordings. Not a commercial issue.

Live Teatro Buenos Aires 1960/1961. *If I Were a Bell – Tune Up – Nice If You Can Get It – Undecided – There Will Never Be Another You – It's Alright With Me*. Personnel: Line-up: Héctor López Furst (v), Rubén Baby López Furst (lead g), Enrique Gutiérrez de León (db), Bernardo Birenbaum (rhythm g).

Live Colegio Marianista, August 6, 1966. *Eveline - There Will Never Be Another You – Alabama Bound – Nuages – If I Were a Bell – Swinging with Django*. Personnel: Héctor López Furst (v), Rubén Baby López Furst (lead g), Jorge "Negro" González (db), Bernardo Birenbaum (rhythm g).



1966. Los Blue Strings. LP *Gipsy* (Trova TL5 – TLM 7005) (Argentina).

Recorded 7, 8, 12 y 16 September 1966.

Mono

Personnel: Héctor López Furst (v), Rubén Baby López Furst (lead g), Enrique Gutiérrez de León (db), Bernardo Birenbaum (rhythm g).

Engineer: Osvaldo Acedo

Producer: Alfredo Radoszynski

Cover design: Carlos Rolando

Side 1: *Swing de menores* (Minor Swing) - *Te me subes a la cabeza* (You Go to My Head) - *Justo a tiempo* (Just in Time) - *Límite de Alabama* (Alabama Bound)

Side 2: *Eveline* (S. Grapelly) - *La gitana* (The Gipsy) (B. Reid) - *Si yo fuese una campana* (If I Were a Bell) (F. Loesser) - *Magnifico si puedes conseguirlo* (Nice Work if You Can Get It) (G. and I. Gershwin).



1971. Cuarteto López Furst. LP *Oliendo los blues* (Surco-Opus / Opus Jazz OJC 20009) Recorded at Phonalex, 15, 29 July 1972, Buenos Aires.

Stereo

Engineer: Norberto Orliac

Cover: María Estela Amaiz

Coordination: Carlos Tealdo Alizieri

Personnel: Héctor López Fürst (electric violin), Rubén López Fürst (electric guitar), Carlos López Fürst (db), Norberto Minichillo (dm).

Lado 1: *Oliendo los blues* (*Sniffin´ the Blues*) – *Mi hora brillante* (*My Shiny Hour*) – *Los paraguas de Cherburgo*

Lado 2: *Paseo dominical* (*Sunday Walking*) – *Valse hot* – *Tiempo de verano* (*Summertime*)



**Sources:**

Andrés “Tito” Liber collection

Risetti, Ricardo. *Memorias del jazz argentino*. Corregidor, Bs. As. 1994.

Web site: <https://rateyourmusic.com/artist/ruben-lopez-furst>

Web site: <https://riverplatejazzfiles.blogspot.com/2009/07/recordando-los-blue-strings.html>

Web site: <https://thejazzstore.com.ar/encuentran-grabacion-inedita-con-los-hermanos-lopez-furst-y-walter-malosetti/>

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