

## BIO Carlos del Junco

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

Born in Havana, Cuba, del Junco (loosely translated "of the reeds") immigrated with his family at the age of one. He bent his first note on a harmonica when he was fourteen, making his debut with his high school math teacher at a student talent night. In his early 20's del Junco was immersed in a visual arts career; he graduated with honours from a four year programme, majoring in sculpture at the Ontario College of Art. Sculpture has definitely had an influence on his outlook on music: "Music is just a different way of creating textures and shapes."

Playing a ten hole diatonic harmonica, Carlos has developed the unique ability to play chromatically by using a recently developed "overblow" technique taught to him by jazz virtuoso Howard Levy. The sophisticated sound produced by del Junco is at once sensitive, soulful, and sexy while never forgetting the rawness inherent in blues music.

During the 80's del Junco performed with many bands including Latin/reggae/r&b band "Eyelevel", "Ontario College of Art Swing Band" with Bill Grove and he had a 6 year stint with rhythm and blues group "The Buzz Upshaw Band". With Kevin Cooke in 1990 he formed a blues/jazz/fusion band, "The Delcomos". He has recorded with Bruce Cockburn, Kim Mitchell, Cassandra Vassick, Oliver Schroer, Zappacosta, and has also worked with Dutch Mason, Hoc Walsh (Downchild Blues Band) and Holly Cole.

In 1991 del Junco performed and composed the music for Tomson Highway's Dora award winning play Dry Lips Oughta Move To Kapuskasing. The production toured Canada and was held over for seven weeks at Toronto's Royal Alex Theatre.

In 1993 Carlos del Junco won two gold medals at the Hohner World Harmonica Championship held in Trossingen, Germany. He was judged world's best in both the diatonic blues category and the diatonic jazz category.

With the late Bill Kinnear, Carlos del Junco released his first CD, Blues on independent label, Big Reed Records in November 1993. The rich collection of blues classics was a collaborative effort with Kinnear playing acoustic and dobro guitars and handling lead vocals. Five out of six reviewers in the Toronto Blues Society, selected Blues for their top ten releases of 1993.

In March/April 1995 del Junco travelled to Chicago with a Canada Council grant to study with Howard Levy. This year saw the release of the critically acclaimed *Just Your Fool* a sizzling live session with Kevin Breit on guitar, Al Duffy on bass, and Geoff Arsenault on drums. It was this CD and the collaborative effort with Thom "Champagne Charlie" Roberts *Big Road Blues*, that won Carlos the 1996 Blues Musician Of The Year Award...

...del Junco continues to produce an eclectic palette of music on *Steady Movin'*, his (2008) 5th recording in a band setting and his second CD for NorthernBlues. It features a mostly acoustic set with 3 solo showcases of Carlos harmonica wizardry. Remarkable guitar work by Kevin Breit, one of the most sought-after session players in Canada and now in the U.S. thanks in large part to his work with Norah Jones and Cassandra Wilson, adds beautiful textures to the 11 track collection.

Carlos has toured Canada regularly since 1996 and tours often in Germany and the United States. He has played all the major jazz, blues, and folk festivals across Canada.