

Blades apenado con demanda de Colón

Por JUAN ZAMORANO - PANAMA - Mayo 09, 2007

AP Associated Press Los que soñaban con ver nuevamente a los legendarios de la salsa Rubén Blades y Willie Colón compartiendo escenario, se quedarán con las ganas. Los otrora compañeros en la música, ahora están en pleito.

Blades juró no volver a subir a una tarima con el famoso trombonista que lo proyectó en la salsa.

El cantautor panameño, ministro de Turismo desde el 2004, se expresó el martes apenado con la demanda presentada en su contra por Colón por supuesto incumplimiento de contrato en un concierto que realizaron ambos en 2003, y aseguró que se trata de un caso en que "nos robaron a los dos".

Blades dijo que nadie lo había emplazado aún sobre esa querrela y que conocía del asunto sólo por los periódicos.

"Yo sinceramente no entiendo esto", manifestó a periodistas de medios extranjeros.

La reacción del intérprete de "Pedro Navaja" tiene lugar después de informarse desde San Juan que Colón había demandado al salsero panameño por incumplimiento de un contrato relativo al espectáculo que ambos presentaron hace cuatro años en un estadio de béisbol en San Juan, para celebrar el 25 aniversario del álbum "Siembra", que fue todo un éxito.

Los representantes legales de Colón argumentan que un acuerdo previo a ese espectáculo establecía que Blades se encargaría de todos los aspectos comerciales del concierto, incluyendo el cobro de 350.000 a los promotores y el pago de 175.000 a Colón por su participación.

Colón le reclama a Blades 115.000 dólares, más el pago de intereses y honorarios de abogados.

Pero Blades negó ese acuerdo, y explicó que dos personas que los representaron tanto a él como a Colón y que recibieron el dinero de los promotores, fueron los que malgastaron la mitad del pago. Los representantes, con los que según Blades había trabajado sin problemas varios años, fueron identificados como Arturo Martínez y Robert Morgalo.

Blades aseguró que poco antes del concierto se comunicó con los promotores en Puerto Rico y que éstos comprobaron el pago, pero que los representantes basados en Nueva York utilizaron la "mitad del dinero para otras cosas".

Refirió que su política siempre había sido cobrar todo antes de presentar cualquier concierto, pero que ante la situación presentada decidió de todas maneras cantar en San Juan, incluso, por recomendaciones y para evitar una demanda.

Aseguró que parte de los gastos en Puerto Rico los pagaron por un dinero que les prestó el salsero Gilberto Santa Rosa, que luego le devolvieron.

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Blades dijo que no demandó a sus representantes porque no tenían plata y se habían metido en problemas. "Nunca en mi vida me había pasado. Esto nos pasó a los dos".

Subrayó que "a mí también me robaron. Nos robaron a los dos".

El abogado de Colón, Juan Saavedra Castro, dijo el martes a la AP en San Juan que la demanda civil podría transarse fuera de los tribunales si Blades le paga a Colón.

"Colón siempre intentó mantener esto fuera de la luz pública y trató de resolverlo extrajudicialmente y lamentablemente no pudo hacerlo", indicó.

Blades comentó que Colón no lo contactó en la reciente visita que hizo a Panamá con motivo de un concierto que presentó con el venezolano Oscar de León, el 31 de abril.

"Nadie está hablando de mi pérdida", manifestó Blades, quien admite que Colón lo proyectó en la salsa a fines de los años 70. "Toda la vida lo respetaré; es un excelente músico. Quizás se haya equivocado (en este caso)".

Colón fue el productor de "Siembra", una producción de fines de los 70 que incluye el clásico "Pedro Navaja".

Sobre si volvería a compartir tarima con su ex compañero, Blades fue tajante: "Más nunca me subiré a un escenario con Colón".

El reportero de la AP en San Juan, Manuel Rivera, contribuyó con este reporte.

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Associated Press/by Juan Zamorano

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“Blades Saddened by Colón’s Claim”

Those who dreamed of seeing the salsa legends Rubén Blades and Willie Colón sharing the stage again will have to keep dreaming. The former music companions are now in litigation.

Blades swore he wouldn’t return to the stage with the famous trombonist who launched him into salsa.

The Panamanian singer/songwriter, Minister of Tourism since 2004, said he was saddened by the Complaint that Colón filed against him alleging breach of contract for the concert that the two performed in 2003, and asserted that it was a case where “they robbed both of us.”

Blades said that no one had even served him with the Complaint and that he learned about the matter only from the newspapers.

“I really don’t understand this,” Blades declared to foreign journalists.

The reaction from the performer of “Pedro Navja” takes place after Blades learned from San Juan that Colón had sued the Panamanian salsa musician for breaching a contract for the show that the two performed four years ago in a baseball stadium in San Juan to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the album “Siembra,” which was a total success.

Colón’s legal representatives argued that an agreement prior to the show established that Blades would be responsible for all commercial aspects of the concert, including the collection of \$350,000 from the promoters and the payment of \$175,000 to Colón for his participation.

Colón is seeking \$115,000 from Blades plus interest and attorney fees.

But Blades denied the agreement, and explained that two people who represented him as well as Colón and who received the money from the promoters were the ones who misspent half of the payment. The representatives, with whom, according to Blades, he had worked without problems for several years, were identified as Arturo Martinez and Robert Morgalo.

Blades affirmed that soon before the concert he communicated with the promoters in Puerto Rico and that they confirmed the payment, but that the representatives based in New York used “half of the money for other things.”

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Blades related that his policy had always been to collect all monies before performing any concert, but that in this situation he decided to sing in San Juan anyway in order to avoid a lawsuit.

Blades affirmed that part of the expenses in Puerto Rico were paid from money that the salsa musician Gilberto Santa Rosa lent them and that they later returned to him.

Blades said that he didn't sue his representatives because they didn't have money and because they had gotten into trouble. "Never in my life has this happened. This happened to both of us."

He emphasized that "they robbed me too. They robbed both of us."

Colón's lawyer, Juan Saavedra Castro, said on Tuesday to AP in San Juan that the civil case could settle out of court if Blades pays Colón.

"Colón always wanted to keep this out of the public light and he tried to resolve it out of court, and unfortunately he wasn't able to do it," Saavedra Castro said.

Blades commented that Colón didn't contact him during the recent visit Colón made to Panama for a concert he performed with the Venezuelan Oscar de León on April 31.

"No one is talking about my loss," said Blades, who admits that Colón launched him into salsa music at the end of the 1970's. "I will respect him my whole life; he's an excellent musician. Maybe he made a mistake (in this case)."

Colón was the producer of "Siembra," a production from the end of the 1970's that includes the classic "Pedro Navaja."

On whether he would again share the stage with his former companion, Blades was cutting: "I will never go back on stage with Colón."

The reporter from AP in San Juan, Manuel Rivera, contributed to this report.

EXHIBIT "B"
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CERTIFICATION OF INTERPRETER

I, MICHAEL B. TOLCOTT, do hereby affirm that I am qualified to translate written Spanish into written English, and do affirm that I prepared the typed English translation of the document written in Spanish that has been attached to this pleading. The document in Spanish is attached as Exhibit "A" and the English translation is attached as Exhibit "B." I further affirm that the document typed in English and prepared by me reflects a true and accurate translation of the original document written in Spanish.

The statements contained in this Certification are true and correct to the best of my knowledge, information and belief. I make this Certification subject to the penalties provided in 18 Pa.C.S.A. § 4904 relating to unsworn falsification to authorities.

s/ Michael B. Tolcott
MICHAEL B. TOLCOTT

DATE: 4/24/08

EXHIBIT "C"