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The **BARAQUIO BUNCH**

Nine Baraquio siblings — clockwise from top right, Bernadette, Rose, Lucy, Gloria, Cecilia, John, Angela, Tess, Jerome — release an album dedicated to their brother who died a year ago, and as a tribute to parents Claudio and Rigolette

Nathalie Walker photos



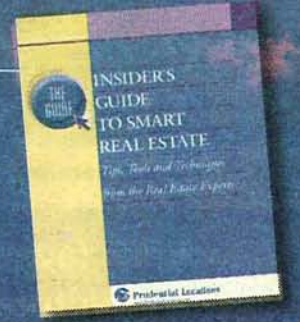
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Music For A Brother

Talk about a family album: Nine Baraquio siblings use the passing of a brother a year ago as inspiration to record a music CD

BY MELISSA MONIZ

To the outside world we all grow old. But not to brothers and sisters. We know each other as we always were. We know each other's hearts. We share private family jokes. We remember family feuds and secrets, family griefs and joys. We live outside the touch of time. — Clara Ortega

It's quite a math equation: Seven girls plus three boys equals 10 siblings, add 10 bachelor's degrees and three master's degrees, multiplied by one television show, one Miss America crown and one soon-to-be-released album. The answer to this equation isn't a number, but a name — meet the Baraquios — Cecilia, Jerome, Lucy, John, Therese, Bernadette, Rose, Angela, Albert and Gloria. All their own individual talents, accomplishments and time spent in the spotlight aside, the Baraquios now share a special achievement — a full-length album that announces to the world the timeless bond of a sibling and the love that is forever.

The album, *Lost and Found*, is an inspirational piece produced in memory of their brother, Albert, who passed away Nov. 28, 2006 at the age of 28. The release, which marks one year since his death by suicide in San Francisco, features a compilation of songs written and

performed by his nine siblings.

"There is one major theme, and that major theme is go forward in life," says John Baraquio, executive producer of the family's new music label, Tribute Records, and the fourth of the Baraquio siblings.

"It came with how I was feeling after the death of my brother. How I was feeling came down on paper. I was tired of feeling crappy and wanted to start moving forward, and so that's how I came up with my three songs. Everyone brought their own songs, and it just turned out to be the same frequency and same page, which is moving forward and celebrating life rather than focusing on a tragedy."

After the death of their youngest brother, the Baraquios looked to their faith and family for the strength to get them through the pain. And they soon discovered that it was music that they needed to release some of the heavy emotions.

"A lot of people who have experienced suicide with a loved one, these people don't find an outlet, and every year it opens up those old wounds again," says Jerome Baraquio, the second-oldest sibling. "So what we're trying to do with this album is offer people an outlet to see that they can relate to someone they know. Hopefully it will offer a little bit of solace and comfort."

"We also want to make a point that we're not glorifying suicide or saying that we support what he did," says Bernadette Baraquio Hamada (the sixth sibling, but only by eight minutes following twin sister Therese, known to the family as Tess). "What we're trying to do is give people hope and show them there's a value of life. And we're trying to let people know that



Family portrait taken in 1980: (bottom) Bernadette, Rose, Angela, John, (middle) Tess, Gloria, mom Rigolette, Albert, dad Claudio, Lucy, (top) Cecilia and Jerome

if you need help, there are always places to go and people to talk to."

The album has 13 tracks, including nine originals, four written by Bernadette, three written by John, one written by Tess and one written by Angela and her husband, Tinifuloa Grey. Two of the cover tracks, *The Anniversary Song* and *Rainbow*, were chosen for the album because they are the two songs they always performed as a family since they were children.

"After we lost Albert, it was a very tough time for our family," says Bernadette. "We found that when we were going through the depression and the different feelings of anger, grief and mourning, that music was really our only source of comfort besides our faith. We used to play music in church and stuff, but we took a break from

music so it's been a while before we've played music together. We hadn't written songs for years, and when he passed, the songs just started to come, it started to flow. These songs just seemed to come out of nowhere and I know it was Albert helping us through these tough times. We didn't ever think, 'Let's go do an album so we can sell some CDs.' It was a way for us to express ourselves and get through that pain."

"The only way we could heal is to create something that was full of life, and I think Albert was shining down on us the whole time," adds Tess.

The November release date has a lot of meaning to the family. It's a time to remember the last Thanksgiving they all shared together as a family, it marks a year

since Albert's passing, and is also the month of Albert's birthday (Nov. 15).

"The thing about Albert, he was 28 years old, he just turned 28 when he died, and that was 28 beautiful years," says Tess. "Even the last two weeks we were able to spend with him when he came back to Hawaii. These are the times that we want to remember. He had a whole life, and he made one decision that affected all that, that we had to lose. Every year that we remember this, and every time we play this album we'll always remember how much we love him. He's always going to be our brother whether he's here on this Earth or in heaven."

The family has a special performance scheduled for Nov. 23

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John, Albert and Jerome at their parents' 40th anniversary party

COVER STORY

Making Music For A Brother

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September 2007 at Jerome's house: (front) Echo, Zoe, (seated) Blaze, Claudio, Seth, Rigolette, Zachary, (middle) Bernadette, Tess, Mel (John's wife), Sterling, Luke, Rose, Gloria, (back) Rick Hamada (Bernadette's husband), John, Jerome and John Harman

rience from performing at church, their God-given talents, the piano lessons and their heavy emotions to create what many church friends often described as "angels singing."

Although they modestly admit that they don't exactly sound like angels individually (just collectively), Bernadette says that everyone can "at least carry a tune." This makes karaoke time at their weekly family parties as competitive as it is fun. As Jerome puts it, "It's a battle and if you don't get 100, you're not even worthy. You've gotta give the mic up to the next

because of what my mom and dad sacrificed."

Cecilia is a licensed marriage and family therapist in California, Jerome is a commercial account manager for Grainger Industrial Supply, Lucy is a senior design manager for Starbucks Coffee International in Washington, John is president of Able Pest Exterminators, Tess is president and

"As a family, this album is the biggest achievement that we've done together," says Tess. "The fact that we all got together in different parts of the world, with all of our families and all of our schedules, to put this project together as a family was truly an amazing feat for all of us."

The writing, recording and now release of the album has truly been a healing process for the Baraquio siblings. They have channeled their grief, confusion and disbelief into something positive that they hope will help others who have been through similar experiences.

"There's such a taboo against suicide, and people's loved ones who have committed death by suicide want to keep it hush hush," says Rose. "And, as we said, we don't want to proclaim it to the world, but for people who have been through



The Baraquios' album, *Lost and Found*

owner of Harmony Productions, Bernadette is manager and owner of Just a Girl Productions, Rose is manager of consumer affairs at Hawaiian Airlines, Angela (the former Miss America) is an inspirational speaker, writer and talent/model in California, and Gloria is working with the Hawaii Academy of Arts and Sciences on the Big Island. Before his passing, Albert was a loan officer at Wells Fargo Bank in California.

it to say to them, 'it's not your fault' So many people want to take the blame and take the guilt, and question through their whole lives, 'how could I have stopped that from happening?' It's not about that. They made a choice. Now, what can I do to move on?"

"This CD is a great way to say that we're not going to carry the guilt, but we are going to put out the word and hopefully some good comes from it."

from noon to 1 p.m. at Ala Moana Centerstage, where they will for the first time come together to perform the songs from their album. The emotional reunion will be one more step in the healing process for the family.

"As the date gets closer to his anniversary date a lot of us are getting more and more emotional because once the holidays hit, it's natural for people to remember previous holidays and how we had such a great time last Thanksgiving," says Bernadette. "Everybody was together, and it will be so noticeable that he isn't going to be here this year. And yes, we have been in the studio for hours and hours playing the same songs, but when I hear it as it gets closer to the date, how I felt when I wrote it and how I feel when I hear it, it's going to be very emotional and it's going to be very important for all of us to be together that week. Anyone who has lost someone during the holidays will understand."

Just as music filled their lives as children, the Baraquios hope that their music also filtrates to the hearts of those who hear it. As children, Rose recalls their mom's firm beliefs about piano lessons and singing.

"My mom was very adamant about having all of us take piano lessons; she forced us pretty much," says Rose. "And she forced us to sing in church. We've been doing that since we could barely walk. We were at Saint Augustine singing as a family for about 15 years until it became too much to handle with all the kids and people living other places. The con-

gregation got to know us as the family that sang together. And everyone would always ask us when we were coming out with a CD."

With 14 of their own children, busy work schedules and siblings scattered throughout California and Hawaii, the Baraquios found that time seemed to be the primary obstacle in their hopes to one day make an album together. After Albert's passing they were instantly reminded that life is too short to put anything on the back burner. So they took their expe-

person."

But before there was music in the Baraquio household growing up, one other thing came first — education. Their parents, Claudio and Rigolette, put every penny that they earned into their children's Catholic private school education.

"Our parents are the pillars of the family," says Bernadette. "They taught us everything we know, and if they didn't teach us directly, they found the people to help us get educated. Everyone is college-educated and everyone has been able to accomplish their dreams

Baraquo Family Shares a Message of Hope and Inspiration in Debut Album "Lost and Found"

"Lost and Found" launches Baraquo siblings' new venture, Tribute Records, LLC

HONOLULU — Faced with a heart-breaking loss, the Baraquo family found hope and inspiration in their shared love for music. The result is "Lost and Found," a compilation of inspirational songs written and performed by nine Baraquo siblings, who launched their musical venture as a way to reaffirm life and the importance of family and faith after the tragic death in 2006 of their youngest brother, Albert.

"Lost and Found" will be released in time for Thanksgiving and also Albert's birthday. The album will be launched at a special performance to be held at the Ala Moana Centerstage on Friday, November 23 from 12 noon to 1 p.m., and the Baraquo family will be available for autographs after the show. "We've been planning to record our music for many years and we thought this would be a perfect time to do it,"

said John P. Baraquo, Executive Producer for the family's new music label Tribute Records. "It's an uplifting CD with a positive message that we chose to release in November because we will always remember the last Thanksgiving we all shared as a family with Albert just days before he left us."

Baraquo Family Shares a Message of Hope and Inspiration in Debut Album "Lost and Found"

John penned the album's title track music and lyrics as well as "Smile" and "It's Hard 'Til It's Easy."

"If our music can help others transcend difficult circumstances, we will feel doubly blessed," said former television newscaster Bernadette Baraquo. Bernadette and her twin sister Tess also have composed songs for the album.

Both manage their own production companies, and are producers and co-hosts of the cable television show "Living Local," along with three other sisters: the album's lead singer Rose, columnist Gloria, and Miss America 2001 Angela Perez Baraquo Grey.

"Lost and Found" is Tribute Records' first release. The album features 13 tracks including "Living for You" by Angela which will all be available online after the release.

The album will be available in stores starting November 20, and will be distributed by Aloha Music International.

Tribute Records, launched in 2007 by the Baraquo family, is an expansion of an entertainment franchise that began with "Living Local," a cable television show starring five sisters: Angela, Bernadette, Tess, Gloria, and Rose.



Baraquo siblings — Front (L-R): Tess, Bernadette, Rose, and Gloria. Back (L-R): Jerome and John.

"Lost and Found," Tribute Record's first release, was produced in memory of their late brother Albert, who passed away on November 28, 2006.

The Honolulu Advertiser

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Daily DOs

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We are family

Is there anything the Baraquos can't do? Miss America 2001 **Angela Perez Baraquo Grey** and her sibs launch their new CD, "Lost and Found"; noon; Ala Moana Centerstage; 275-3012.



PAGE 16 NOVEMBER 21-27, 2007 EAST OAHU & HONOLULU PEOPLE



Courtesy photo

The Baraquo siblings will perform cuts from their new CD at Ala Moana Centerstage this Friday. See listing for details.

EAST OAHU & HONOLULU PEOPLE NOVEMBER 21-27, 2007 PAGE 17

THIS WEEK IN EAST OAHU & HONOLULU

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FRIDAY | NOV. 23

DEBUT CD CONCERT

The Baraquo Family will debut cuts from their new CD, "Lost and Found," at noon on Ala Moana's Centerstage. The album is a compilation of inspirational songs written and performed by nine Baraquo siblings. An autograph session will follow the performance. Call John Baraquo at 330-1839.