

# Danny Ugarte and the Plazas

by Charlie Horner

With contributions from Pamela Horner

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How many of us get to live our childhood dreams? How many of us even get close? Growing up, I idolized the singers in the pioneer R&B groups. Sure, I wanted to someday be on stage singing with a doo wop group. But I didn't have the voice, so I became a historian of the music, hosting a radio show for 25 years, researching and writing about the singers and producing acappella shows. At least I could contribute to preserving the music's legacy. But some among us were blessed with the ability to sing and the desire to work hard and hone their talents. If they grew up in the 1950's and were influenced by the Orioles, Larks and Cadillacs, and if Lady Luck smiled their way, maybe they had a chance. Not a chance to become rich from the music, because few did. But a chance to have the spotlight shine on them, if only briefly. A chance to say, "I sang in a vocal group, and we were good!"

"There was so much talent in my neighborhood," recalled Danny Ugarte, who's been singing since he was eleven. "Some of the guys made it. But some of the best talent never even got a crack [at fame]. They didn't even do anything. I didn't do anything either but I got close. I got close a couple times. But I love it. And I love meeting people from back then who were involved with the music and grew up the same way I did - liking the music and saying that someday I'm going to be singing that stuff. And I ended up doing it. I'm very lucky. I'll be 73 and I'm still doing it."

## Early Years

Danny Ugarte was born in 1944 in the South Bronx. The area would later be immortalized in the 1981 movie, "Fort Apache: The Bronx" after it had slid into a period of economic decline with a high crime rate, but in the late forties and 1950's it was not like that. Danny came from a musical family. His father was a professional drummer and president of Local 802 chapter of the American Federation of Musicians, the powerful musicians union in New York City. Danny's brother Joe Ugarte, also a drummer, was showcased at Carnegie Hall at the age of eight by drummer greats Max Roach, Buddy Rich and Louie Bellson.

Danny grew up listening to the pioneer vocal groups on the radio. His favorite radio disc jockey was Jocko Henderson. "These guys were fabulous," recalled Danny of the early R&B vocal groups. "That's why I wanted to be like them. My father said, 'You know they don't make any money.' I said, 'I know. I don't plan on making money.'"

Danny and his brother would sometimes sneak off and take the subway down to the Apollo Theatre to see their favorite stars. Having a father in the music business also put Danny in the company of many of his

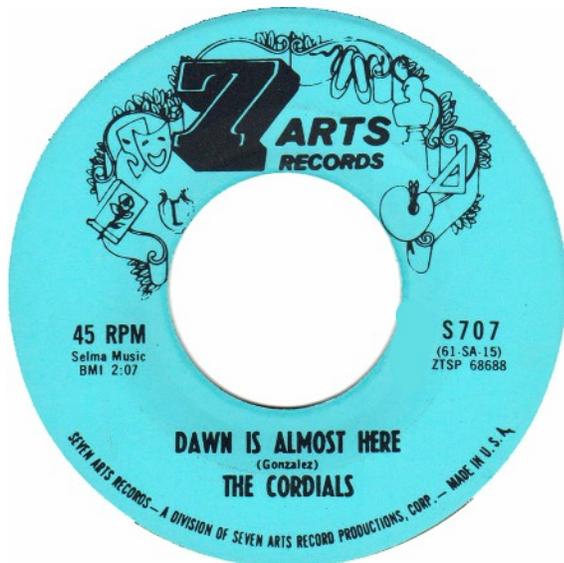


Danny Ugarte

singing idols. "I remember going to see the Chords [also from the Bronx] and I had to be eleven or twelve," said Danny. "I couldn't get into the place so I tried to hide as close as I could get to see them. Then one of the Chords saw me and called me in because he knew who I was. He took me in and I watched the show. Then he walked me home and up to the door. My father was ready to kill me until he saw who it was. Then he said, 'Thanks for bringing the kid home!' That's how much I was influenced by the music and what was going on. But the thing with growing up in a musical family, was the people that I got to meet in the music industry due to my father. Like the Ink Spots or the Chords. People like that."

The Local 802 offices were located inside New York City's Roseland Ballroom in Manhattan and the Ugarte brothers would often visit their father where he worked. "At the Roseland Ballroom, to get to the union office, there was catwalk," said Danny. "Once you went in the door, you'd have to walk this catwalk to the end and that's where the union was. Well, my brother and I used to walk the catwalk. Every week we'd be listening to guys singing below. The catwalk had railings and was attached to a wall but one side was open. You could look down and see a group rehearsing in the ballroom below. We said, 'Hey who are those guys singing downstairs?' and my father said, 'Those are the Cadillacs.' Here I was, this little kid, listening to the Cadillacs. They used to rehearse there. You had to have a pull to get into there because the ballroom was closed. But I used to watch and listen to them all the time and say,

## The Cordials



'Those guys are so good.' I probably heard them rehearsing their later songs before they recorded them."

"I was quite young when I started to sing," remembered Danny. "I was probably around eleven years old. I sang with the neighborhood guys. We watched the older guys singing and then we just started singing. With the musical background I had, everything came easy to me. Everything came easy to my brother, Joe. He always had his own group and I always had mine. We always had guys we used to sing with. And in my neighborhood, there were a lot of good, good, groups around - The Five Delights, the Eternals. Ernie Sierra [Eternals] had a brother, Richie, with a group. They were probably the best group in the neighborhood. Never made a dime. The Eternals got lucky. They did two songs that made it. And then there was the [nearby] Morrisania area groups with Lillian Leech & the Mellows, Arthur Crier & the Halos." [not to mention the Chords, Crickets, etc.]

"When I was twelve, I used to go to the Polo Grounds," said Danny. "We used to go there and get baseball gloves and bats. They used to give them to us. And who did I see at the Polo Grounds all the time, Herman Santiago. I remember when he made it big. I saw him with the sweaters with the big "T" for Teenagers. I said, "That's the guy from the Polo Grounds."

Frankie Lymon & the Teenagers were a huge inspiration to youngsters all over the country, but especially in New York. "Everyplace you went, you'd hear somebody singing," recalled Danny. "And I said, 'I want to sing with a group where people would say, you see that guy? He sings with so and so. He sings in that group.' I used to strive for that - to be the best."

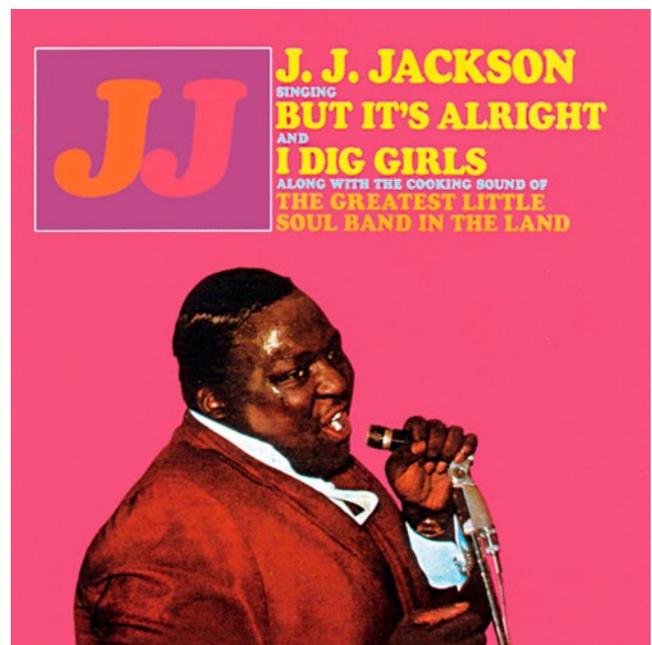
"Then some of the guys started to make it. The Five Delights, they just recorded. And then, look! The Eternals were in the studio recording "Rockin' In The Jungle" and "Babalu's Wedding Day". We wanted to be like everybody else."

Danny Ugarte's first serious group was the Cordials. He was invited to join the group by one of the guys in the neighborhood, Nicky Lopez. "Nicky sang like a bird," Danny remembered. "If you heard the Paragons doing 'Florence', that's what he sounded like. His was just a beautiful voice. And Nicky sang with the Cordials. Another guy that I remember was Frankie Gimenez. I think the bass' name was Ben something. And the original lead singer of the Cordials was Jerome Jackson." Jerome Louis Jackson was born in Brooklyn but grew up in the Bronx. In 1966, long after leaving the Cordials he would gain fame as the solo singer, J.J. Jackson, with the song "But It's Alright".

"The biggest show that I did with the Cordials," said Danny Ugarte, "Was a big show at Samuel Gompers High School. Samuel Gompers High School was a vocational school in the Bronx. It had car mechanics, electricians and it also taught audio technicians. The kids in the school put this audio system in the auditorium and it was the best system I ever sang in, in my life."

The Cordials would eventually record "Dawn Is Almost Here" for the 7 Arts label (#707) in 1961. Danny Ugarte was not on the recording. "I believe Frankie Jimenez' uncle was the one that recorded 'Dawn Is Almost Here'," said Danny. "They recorded that when I was moving to Plainfield, NJ. I'd already left. They asked if I could come back to do the recording but I said, 'No, I'm moving away and have no way to get back.'"

Sources list the personnel on the 7 Arts recording session as Frank Gimenez, Jerome Louis Jackson, Nicky Lopez, Bernard Newman and Tito Gonzalez. The lead on "Dawn..." is most likely Tito Gonzalez since he wrote the song. The flip, "Keep An Eye" was written by J. J. Jackson.



Soul singer, J J Jackson

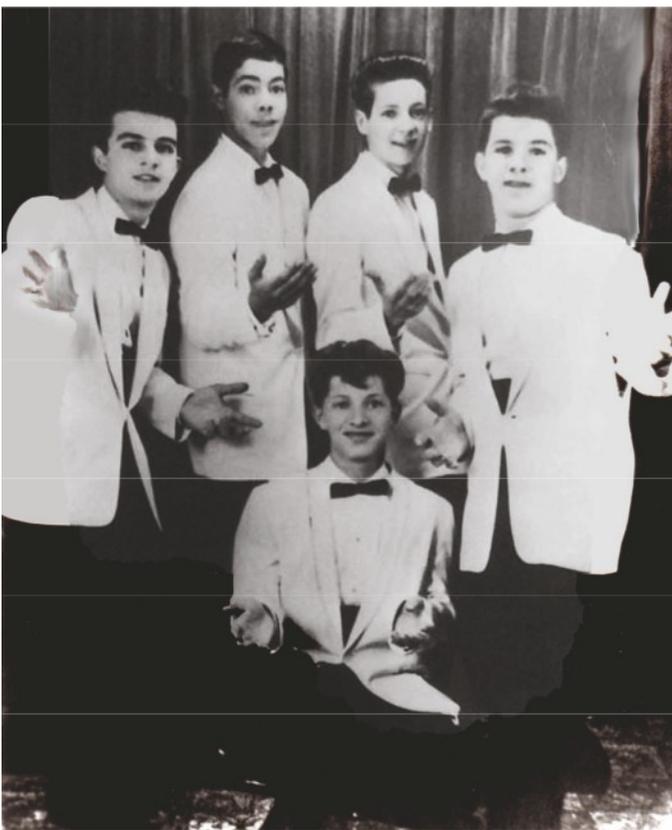
## The Plazas

Early in 1960, when Danny Ugarte was 16, he and his family moved to Plainfield, New Jersey. Danny found himself going to Plainfield High School where he met his new singing group. "For fifth period lunch in high school, we were allowed to leave school and go across the street," recalled Danny. "I went across the street and these guys were singing. At that time, their name was not yet the Plazas. I don't know what their name was. I went to where they were singing and started listening to those guys. And I said to myself, 'Gee these guys aren't bad.' I said, 'Hey guys, do you know this song?' And they said, 'Yeah. Why, do you sing?' I said, 'A little bit.' And I started to sing. Well, the rest is history. I never left those guys. I remember all five of us standing there one day, trying to think of a name for the group. We saw a 1955 or '56 Plymouth Plaza ride by. And we said, 'Plazas! That sounds good.' And that's how we got the name."

Danny replaced Richie Rossi in the Plazas. The Plazas now consisted of John Martinkovic (lead and first tenor), Danny Ugarte (lead and first tenor), Michael Barletta (second tenor), Larry Verdicchio (baritone) and Anthony "Dome" Ventura (bass). By 1961, the Plazas were entertaining at school dances like the Plainfield High School's junior class' "Silver Snow Ball" held in the school auditorium on January 27. The Plazas performed



**The Plazas**



**The Plazas, ca. 1962. Left to right, top, Mike Barletta, Danny Ugarte, John Martinkovic, Larry Verdicchio. Bottom: Anthony Ventura (Photo courtesy of Danny Ugarte)**

along with the Mood Makers band. On Friday, March 3, the Plazas sang at another dance, sponsored by the Plainfield High School Canteen at the Emerson School. The Plazas were featured along with a four piece band called the Embers, featuring Ward Kremer at the drums.

Plainfield, New Jersey, was loaded with young talent. Vocal groups like George Clinton & the Parliaments (*Flipp* label), Sammy & the Del Larks (*Ea-Jay* label), Jo Jo and the Admirations (*Hull* label), and the Dynamics (*Decca* label) were everywhere. [See "Sammy Campbell and the Del Larks," *Echoes of the Past*, # 86 (2008), also on [www.ClassicUrbanHarmony.net](http://www.ClassicUrbanHarmony.net)].

"We were doing these shows in Plainfield," said Danny. "And you had groups like the Parliaments, Sammy & the Del Larks and others. So, we did the show and boom! The Parliaments came out there and knocked us out. They had these kelly green suits on. We said, 'Holy smokes! Look how these guys are dressed!' And then Sammy & the Del Larks came out with their fancy outfits. Then the MC says, 'And ladies and gentlemen, the Plazas.' We walked out with black pants and white short-sleeve shirts. And when we got up on the stage and started singing, we blew them away. Sammy and the Del Larks had a guy named Jimmy Cunningham. Jimmy wanted to sing with us. They also had Jimmy Anderson as bass. I went to high school with Jimmy. We had a couple classes together. I never realized Jimmy sang. After he heard my group, he said, 'You know, I'd like to sing with you guys.' Because we had a theory. We said, 'Listen. It doesn't make any difference if we can't afford to look like that. But we have



**The Plazas backing Emil Spak, ca. 1962**

to go all the way with what we got and that was to sing."

"There was a great band, called the Zephers. They used to back everybody up. The talent that that group had! They had a guitar player called Clayton Kremer [*younger brother of drummer Ward Kremer mentioned earlier*]. One day Clayton Kremer said, 'Guys, I'm giving up the guitar.' We said, 'You've got to be crazy. What are you going to do?' He said, 'I'm playing keyboards.' We said, 'What? You're not going to do anything with that.' Well, six months later he was playing at the Metropole Cafe in New York City."

The Plazas were a great group and as they evolved they got even better. Anthony (they called him Dome) Ventura was short in stature but had a rich deep bass voice. "I remember taking Anthony to New York City and hooked him up with Charlie Moffett, the great bass of the Velours," said Danny. "And Charlie started to work with this kid. Dome was nothing like Charlie Moffett but Charlie was teaching him. Anthony was a good bass. Not an outstanding bass but a very, very, good bass. And Charlie worked with him for a little bit. Then Charlie disappeared but this kid improved one hundred percent."

Though the Plazas were at first just performing locally, they soon became a fixture at New York City's Brill Building in the heart of Tin Pan Alley. It started when their manager had them showcased in New York for different record labels.

"We were told get dressed and be in New York in this hotel at a certain time and come up to room such and such," said Danny. "It was a showcase. A guy who was managing us at the time said, 'I'm doing a showcase and I want you guys there.' Well different New York record labels were there. And once we performed, we left the room. The guy who was managing us was trying to cut a deal with anybody that was interested. So he came in the back and said, 'Decca/Coral' is going to be the one to record you.' Now, the Demensions were the

number one group for that label and they had 'My Foolish Heart'. The executives said to us, 'Listen, I just want to let you guys know, if you come aboard with us, you're not going to be the number one group. We already have a number one group.' We said that wasn't a big deal. Before we even got into the contract talks, we went to the Coral office and the guy was sitting there. We walked in and there were five of us. He looked at us and said, 'Wait a minute. There's one guy there who wasn't in the showcase.' And we said, "Yes, it's this guy.' He said, 'That's not what I bought.' That shot the deal dead for some reason. But somehow, this led to us getting work at the Brill Building on Broadway."

By the early 1960's, the Brill Building had become the most prestigious address in New York for music business professionals. The Brill Building contained more than 160 music businesses. In the building you could find songwriters, publishing companies, record labels, recording studios, promoters and the like.

"We went to the Brill Building at 1619 Broadway and worked with couple of guys," said Danny. "The one I remember is Murray Wack. They were going to put out some of the stuff we recorded but for some reason we never got the stuff out. We ended up doing background work for singers. If they needed background work, they would come and say, 'We have a session coming up with so and so and you've got to put some voices behind it. They would pay us to do that. And that's basically what we ended up doing. I remember one day we were in the office and Burt Bacharach came in. Now, we didn't know him from Adam. He played this song for us that he'd written for Dionne Warwick. We were scheduled to do the background for the song. We got paid and everything, but they ended up doing the song with girl background singers. It was 'Walk On By', Dionne's first big hit. Those were the people that we dealt with but we had no idea who they were. There were so many writers that hung out there."



**Eric Seijo & the Plazas**

"When we did backup work, we usually decided what parts to put in. If they didn't like it they'd say, 'This is what we want you to put in.' But normally, we'd listen to the track they had and then they'd say, 'OK guys, do something for the background for this.' So we would start fooling around with it and if we didn't have something, we'd take a demo of the track, go to my house and practice until we got to know the song. Then we'd call Murray up and say, 'We've got it down. We're walking into the studio.' For some of the tracks we did, I don't even know who the stars were. We didn't know because all we did was listen to a dummy copy. The 'Walk On By' song - we didn't hear Dionne Warwick singing. We heard Bacharach singing it." The star would had their lead voice to the tracks the Plazas had already laid down.

The Plazas did backup work at the Brill Building for about four years. On one occasion, their bass singer, Dome, was sent down to Philadelphia to do a recording session with the Dreamlovers.

"We were just amazed that we got a chance to work in the Brill Building and saw some of the biggest stars in the world walk in and out," said Danny. "People that eventually made it. Carole King and Paul Simon used to go in and out of there. If you were going to make a record in the New York vicinity, the Brill Building would be the place you had to go to. Anybody who had a song would come and try to sell it to somebody at the Brill Building. We got lucky and made a couple dollars just backing people up."

Around 1962, the Plazas were approached by



**Nicky Addeo & Plazas, 1964. Top: Bobby Stearn, Nicky Addeo, Tony Ventura. Bottom: Joe Ugarte, Jimmy Chidnese, Danny Ugarte.**



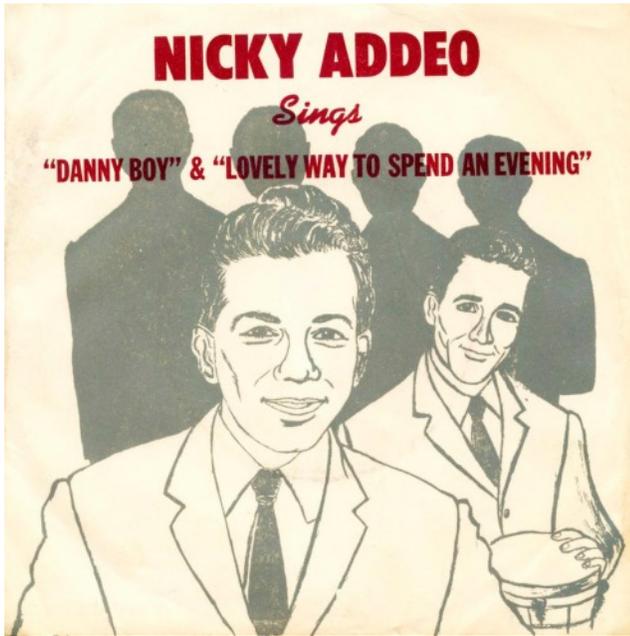
### Nicky Addeo & Plazas on Revelation VII

singer/songwriter named Emil Spak who wanted them to back him on a song he'd written. It turned out to be a rock-a-billy tune called "Stuck Up". The Plazas arranged the background to the song.. It was recorded for Geno Viscione's *WGW* label (#3004) out of Somerville, NJ. Viscione owned a music studio in nearby Manville and his *WGW* label later featured the Contessas as well as a number of white garage bands and rock-a-billy artists. The backing instrumental was provided by Viscione's band, the Encores. The recording session was most likely done at Geno's studio in Manville, NJ. [For more on Geno Viscione and the *WGW* label, see "Hub City Harmony," *Echoes of the Past, Issue 107* (Spring 2014), also on [www.ClassicUrbanHarmony.net](http://www.ClassicUrbanHarmony.net)]

Personnel wise, the Plazas continued to evolve. "My brother Joe Ugarte came and sang with us," said Danny. Paul Nocilla was singing with the Dynamics, another Plainfield High School group who had released three records for the *Decca* label. When the Dynamics broke up, Paul was brought into the Plazas. Paul was also a great songwriter. "Although the original Plazas were very, very, good," said Danny, "They guys who came after them were really, really, good. We turned out to be one of the best groups around. In fact, everybody used to call us the 'blue-eyed soul brothers'."

Through their connections in the music business, the Plazas met music producer Ralph Seijo of Colonia, New Jersey. Danny Ugarte believes Ralph had in some way been involved with "Gee" by the Crows and it is very possible, since Ralph Seijo had once been A&R man for George Goldner's *Tico* label. [The Crows recorded "Mambo Shevitz" for *Tico* in 1954.] Ralph's son, Eric Seijo, was singing at the time and Ralph was looking to record him.

Eric told us he was singing and we became very good friends," said Danny. "He said, 'I'm going into the studio and I want you guys to go in with me. I want you



**Picture sleeve to the Revelation VII record.  
(Courtesy of Mike Molinaro)**

to record these two songs.' We went into the studio at five o'clock in the afternoon and at five o'clock in the morning we walked out of the studio. It was only the one song, 'I Wish' that gave us trouble. The other song, 'It's The Last Kiss,' we did right away. On 'I Wish' we kept doing a certain part and it wasn't right. Eric's father would come running out and start yelling at us. He said, 'Somebody's messing up.' We would do all the parts individually and they would be right. But when we recorded them... something was off."

The personnel on the Eric & the Plazas songs were Eric Seijo, Danny Ugarte, Joe Ugarte and Bobby Stearn. "I Wish" came out on the *Production* label (#63106), Ralph Seijo's label. It was reviewed in *Cashbox* on November 16, 1963, as "New teen warbler does a fine ballad-beat survey of an inviting sentimental. Backing the songster's delivery is a softie chorus (The Plazas) and a combo (Ralph Casals Trio). Deck has a worthy oldies-but-goodies feel." The song received a B rating.

Oddly, *Billboard Magazine* had reviewed another Eric record on *Production* (#6331), six months earlier in May 1963. Danny Ugarte had no recognition of either "Blue Valley" or "Foolish Me" and it is presumed the Plazas were not on that release. "Eric sang with us for awhile," recalled Danny. "Then he kind of ventured out on his own."

The following year, 1964, found the Plazas recording "A Lovely Way To Spend An Evening" and "Danny Boy" with Asbury Park lead singer, Nicky Addeo. "We met Nicky down the Shore," said Danny. "We all used to hang out in the same place. Nicky heard us singing and said, 'You guys are great! Can I sing something with you?' He started to sing. Nicky was a very, very, powerful singer. We could actually do a show with

him over here and us over there and everybody would still hear Nicky with no problem. So we started doing that.

Nicky and the Plazas record came out on Al Mott's *Revelation VII* label (#7-101) out of Allenhurst, New Jersey. Singing on the record were Nicky Addeo (lead), Danny Ugarte, Joe Ugarte, Bobby Stearn and Tony Ventura (bass). Jimmy Chidnese played bongos but didn't sing. The band on the record was the Counts, consisting of Harry Feinhals, Bob Speck, Stuart Serine, Bill Fitzgerald and Richard Dinar.

Nicky Addeo & the Plazas continued singing together locally. On March 6, 1964, Nicky and the Plazas were among the headliners in the Ninth Annual Boys' Club Review in the Asbury Park High School auditorium. The review included thirty acts including Asbury Park's own Criterions (post Tim Hauser). A newspaper review added that "Nicky Addeo of Asbury Park displayed the strongest voice singing 'Danny Boy' and 'A Lovely Way To Spend An Evening' both of which he recently recorded." By April, Nicky was advertised as performing with the Counts, presumably without the Plazas.

On September 26, 1964, the Plazas appeared on a huge "Hootenanny" program in Plainfield High School featuring nearly twenty groups. In addition to the Plazas, other performers included the Afro Jazz Dancers, the Conchords, Jimmy Gator & his All Stars, Mersey Johnson, the Squires, the Paradons, the Saratogas, the Bohemian Gentleman, Jo Jo and the Admirers [Admirations], the Tri Dells, Sue Rose, Harry Ring & the Fabulous Strings, the Pets, the Parliaments and the Parlets.

For awhile, the Plazas were able to find replacements when members left. Nicky Lopez who'd sung with Danny Ugarte in the Cordials was even a later member of the Plazas. "Eventually Anthony ended up going into the army," said Danny. From the new group, my brother ended up going into the army. For us, trying



**Sound Investment. Left to right: Bob Albert, Charlie Ball, Danny Ugarte, Larry Verdicchio, Arnie Schiessl. (Courtesy of Danny Ugarte)**

to replace somebody was very, very, hard because you're looking for a certain something and you can't find it." The Plaszas finally drifted apart.

### Sound Investment

Danny Ugarte and Larry Verdicchio went on to join the group, Sound Investment in the 1970's. The members of Sound Investment would also include Bob Albert, Charlie Ball and Arnie Schiessl. Charlie Ball had previously sung with the group, Remaining Few. Bobby Albert had sung with a number of groups prior to Sound Investment, including Now & Then. Arnie also had experience singing with groups prior to Sound Investment.

Sound Investment had started out as an acappella group. "We went to Lead East in Parsippany, New Jersey, recalled Danny. We were on the acappella concert there. So we put on our red suits and we went out and did five Flamingos songs. And everybody just couldn't get over it. Then after that, whenever anybody saw us they said, "Oh you're the Flamingo guys. We used to love the Flamingos. One of the biggest moments of my life with these guys was when Sound Investment was doing an oldies show. We were in the bleachers because the show was outside, and we start singing "Wisdom Of A Fool," by the Five Keys. After we finished the song, a gentleman got up and started clapping. It was Rudy West." [To see a video of Sound Investment singing acappella, check out Tommy Petillo's "Jersey Music and Video Spotlight" from 1995 on Youtube.]

Sound Investment eventually became a band, though they retained the vocal harmony unit. "It was a change going from an acappella group to being a band,"



**Nicky & the Nite Owls. Left to right: Danny Ugarte, Larry Verdicchio, Mr. Popeye, Nicky Addeo, Charlie Ball. (Courtesy of Danny Ugarte).**



**The Cameos. Left to right: Mike Guaragna, Danny Ugarte, John Basilone, Cathy Carbone (seated), Paul Stuart, Arno Petronzio, Jamie Bannon, Chris Cerullo. (Courtesy of Danny Ugarte).**

said Danny. "As an acappella group, we didn't sing the background, we sang the music [part]. The problem was, when we first started singing with the band we said we can't do this anymore. The music is going to play the music. We've got to sing the background."

Eventually, Arnie left the band, and Greg Surek took his place. Sound Investment was always a great group, but eventually time took its toll on them. By around 2008, the group had split apart.

### Nicky Addeo & the Night Owls

While still singing in Sound Investment, Danny, Larry and Charlie Ball would on occasion perform as Nicky Addeo's Night Owls. "When Nicky did a show and he was going to use singers and a band," said Danny, "We became the Night Owls."

A 2008 Nicky Addeo and the Nite Owls followed on the *Collectables* label. Personnel listed included Nicky Addeo, Danny Ugarte, Bobby Blue Castellano and Ken "Mr. Popeye" Pentifallo, with Dennis Testa on one track. Over the years, Danny Ugarte is on a number of the recordings by Nicky Addeo and the Night Owls. On some recordings, Danny's voice is used more than once in overdubs. [For more on Nicky Addeo see "Asbury Park Vocal Groups Part ,2" *Echoes of the Past*, # 100 (2012), also on [www.ClassicUrbanHarmony.net](http://www.ClassicUrbanHarmony.net)]

"After I went with the Cameos, said Danny, "The Nite Owls would still go out and if I wasn't busy I would sing with them. If not, Nicky would bring in Joel Katz or different people.

### The Cameos

Danny Ugarte currently sings with the Cameos, one of the most popular oldies bands in New Jersey and the surrounding states. Not to be confused with several other groups with the same name, the Cameos have a



**The Cameos with Pam & Charlie at Doo Wop Explosion II, Monmouth University, March 4, 2017  
(Photo by Marian Cicerale)**

long history. The group was started in 1959 as a street corner group in Newark, New Jersey. According to one newspaper report, the Cameos recorded one record that year, "Rock And Roll Arabian Knights" (label unknown to us). The group continued over the years, sometimes using other names such as the Nic Nacs, before becoming inactive. The one common thread among personnel was bass singer, Roger Del Russo. In 1997, Del Russo reunited the Cameos and they performed at numerous venues from Carnegie Hall to the Meadowlands. When Del Russo died in 2006, the Cameos were kept going by their drummer Paul Stuart. "Paul Stuart knew Sound Investment," remembered Danny. "We got to be friends. I would sing with the Cameos every time they needed a replacement. They would ask, 'Are you busy?' I met John Basilone. In fact, he did one job with me and Nicky. Then his guitar player left and Paul ended up with the Sound Investment guitar player. That kind of led to the end of Sound Investment. But Paul said, "Listen, Danny, you're always welcome to come with the Cameos. And I decide to go with the Cameos. I've been with them ever since."

The Cameos are now an eight person vocal and instrumental doo wop and instrumental band. The Cameos' four primary harmony singers are Danny Ugarte, John Basilone, Chris Cerullo and Arno Petronzio.

John Basilone grew up in the Steven Crane Village projects in Newark, the same area that Frankie Valli was from. John began singing vocal harmony as a youngster, as did his brother Angelo, who was the lead of the well known acappella group, the Savoy's. Arno Petronzio is also from New Jersey and has been singing with various bands for more than 40 years. He also plays keyboards for the group. Chris Cerullo is the youngest of the Cameos' primary singers. He began singing with the acappella group, Vito & the Twilights while at Rutgers University in 1990. The Vito & Twilights appeared on two CD's on the Starlight label. He then founded the

group, Remembrance, that won UGHA's Rookie Group of the Year in 1995.

Others in the Cameos' band are Paul Stuart (band leader and percussionist), Cathy Carbone (sax & vocals), Jamie Bannon (lead/rhythm guitar and vocals) and Angelo Olivieri (bass/guitar and vocals). The Cameos website is [www.thecameos.com](http://www.thecameos.com).

The Cameos are extremely popular and are kept busy with numerous bookings. "We were very fortunate to open for some of the biggest stars in the world," said Danny. "I thought opening for the Temptations and Four Tops at the NJ PAC Center was big until Frankie Valli did his first show back home since the Four Seasons musical was out and we opened for him."

And the four singers in the Cameos still do acappella shows on occasion. They were superb as part of Classic Urban Harmony's Doo Wop Explosion II all-acappella concert at Monmouth University this past March 4. They will also be featured at our 25th acappella show and 2nd anniversary at Roxy & Dukes Roadhouse in Dunellen, NJ, on July 30, 2017.

"Good acappella is very, very, refined music," reflected Danny Ugarte. "It's difficult. If you don't know what you're singing, it's hard. Especially when you get down to the deep roots of rock & roll. I'm very lucky to be doing what I enjoy. I'm really having a nice life."

#### Notes

1. Based on interviews with Danny Ugarte.
2. Special thanks to Greg Surek and Mike Molinaro.
3. In New Jersey, catch the Cameos singing acappella at Roxy & Dukes, 745 Bound Brook Rd, Dunellen, NJ on Sunday, July 30, 2017. It marks our second anniversary (25th show) of monthly doo wop acappella concerts at Roxy & Dukes. Doors open at 7 PM. For reservations, email us at [CUH@att.net](mailto:CUH@att.net).
4. For more articles, photos, videos, events and the latest in vocal group harmony news, visit Pam & Charlie Horner's Classic Urban Harmony website at [www.ClassicUrbanHarmony.net](http://www.ClassicUrbanHarmony.net)

#### Related Singles Discography

##### **The Cordials:**

*7 Arts #707* Dawn Is Almost Here  
Keep An Eye

##### **As Emil Spak & Encores/The Plazas**

*WGW 3004* Stuck-Up  
[instrumental]

##### **As Eric with the Plazas**

*Production 63106* I Wish  
It's The Last Kiss

##### **As Nicky Addeo & the Plazas**

*Revelation VII 101* Danny Boy  
A Lovely Way To Spend An Evening