

## Interview with Ariel Aparicio

By ChicagoPride.com

**The Renaissance Rocker: Ariel Aparicio**

Cuban, New Yorker, father and rock star, and he can make a mean Pad Se Ew: Ariel Aparicio is a true renaissance man. Since he moved to New York from Miami to study music and audio engineering at NYU, he's released two CMJ charting CDs and launched and operated two wildly successful restaurants in Brooklyn. But his latest musical effort "Frolic & F\*\*\*" is not at what you'd expect from a gay Cuban restaurateur. Ariel adds a tinge of San Francisco psych, a touch of dubby upbeats and slapbacks, and a healthy dose of sludgy hard rock to his punk rock. Hold the soy.

Frolicking (but maybe not so much F\*\*\*ing) his way to Chicago for the Gay Games, **Ariel will open for Dangerous Muse at Circuit Nightclub 2.0, Wednesday, July 19, 2006** ([Event Details](#)). However before then, he kicks back with ChicagoPride.com to let us know just where this renaissance man finds the time, energy and influence for his all his broad and accomplished interests.



**CP:** How has being Latin and living in NYC influenced your music?

**AA:** Music is a very important component in Latin culture. I grew up surrounded by music. Music blasting from the stereo constantly, and weekly impromptu "jams" at my house or my neighbors house. This is what made me want to become a musician. Watching my parents and their friends sing and play instruments - well,

there was nothing more beautiful and fascinating for me. Granted, this was always salsa and meringue and boleros and all kinds of Latin music. I, for whatever reason, chose Rock & Roll. This doesn't mean that the salsa stuff didn't influence me. I think it's all there.

NYC was where I discovered Punk Rock. When I started listening to my own music, it was mostly "classic" rock. The Stones, Zeppelin, The Doors, Queen - and then came Bowie. Everything changed after that.

I started getting a taste for new wave/punk, art-rock, disco, funk, and everything after The Thin White Duke came into my life. Then the Pretenders first album came out and it was all over. I discovered Blondie, Ian Dury & The Blockheads, Devo, the B-52's, The Flying Lizards. Then I headed to NY. There I discovered The Ramones, Buzzcocks, The Clash, NY Dolls, The Stooges, The Replacements, Talking Heads, Television, The Psychedelic Furs, Johnny Thunders and so on. That's what clinched it for me. This was the music I wanted to make.

**CP:** What was the last record you bought? What new artists are you enjoying?

**AA:** The Raconteurs - great stuff. My favorite "new" artists are The Yeah, Yeah, Yeahs, The White Stripes, Cat Powers, My Morning Jacket, Rufus Wainwright, Bright Eyes.

**CP:** How do you balance your time between running two wildly successful Brooklyn Thai restaurants and writing, recording, and performing music?

**AA:** It ain't easy. I also just became a dad. I have to totally manage my time. Now, everything revolves around the baby so in between naps I do the book keeping and the ordering for the restaurants, practice and

work on new stuff. I take two days a week where I go to my studio for three to four hours and just work on music, usually one day alone and the other day with my band. Honestly, there aren't enough hours in the day but you just do what you have to do.

**CP:** What is your writing process? Do you arrange with the band? Or bring the songs fully formed for them to learn?

**AA:** I always write alone on acoustic guitar. When I'm ready to introduce a new song to the band, it is a finished work. However, The Hired Guns are awesome and they always contribute to the final arrangement of the song. We might extend a bridge or repeat a chorus or add a lead. these things always seem to develop naturally with every song.

**CP:** Has becoming a father influenced your songwriting?

**AA:** I've already written a couple songs for my son. They still ROCK though. They're not sapping lullabies - at least, not yet.

**CP:** At what point in your professional life did you feel comfortable coming out to your peers?

**AA:** It took a few years. Ironically, my first band was almost all gay, but after that I kind of stayed in the closet musically. I sometimes even adjusted my lyrics so that they wouldn't be blatantly gay or else I would kind of mumble the words at rehearsals. But soon I took the initiative and advertised for musicians as an "openly gay" singer/songwriter and never looked back. It was actually the best thing I ever did and never got any flack for it.