

LATIN BEAT LINER NOTES



Put 312

Blurb:

Upbeat grooves from established and rising stars of Latin pop, R&B and salsa

The Latin world includes Latinos in the US, Central and South America, the Spanish-speaking Caribbean as well as Europe's Iberian Peninsula, not to mention Latin immigrant communities across the globe. This vast geographical spread has also meant that Latin music includes a huge variety of rhythms and styles. Despite its diversity, music from Latin cultures has at least two common threads: it's got a good beat and you can dance to it!

Rhythm is the foundation of Latin music and its captivating pulse has crossed boundaries of time and culture to impact the music we all listen to. While Latin music has changed with the times, adding elements of jazz, rock, soul, funk, hip-hop, pop and more, its irresistible rhythms have been a musical constant.

On this collection, we explore funky new blends in Latin music, where electronic beats, hip-hop flavors, DJ remixes and cutting-edge grooves are fused effortlessly with Colombian *cumbia*, Cuban *son*, Mexican *banda*, Spanish *flamenco*, Afro-Peruvian roots, tropical pop and more.

Spanish:

El mundo latino está integrado por la comunidad latina en Estados Unidos, América Central y América del Sur, la parte hispanohablante del Caribe y la Península Ibérica en Europa, así como por las comunidades de inmigrantes latinos en el resto del mundo. La gran diseminación de latinos por todo el mundo, generó la incorporación de una enorme variedad de ritmos y estilos a la música latina. Más allá de su diversidad, la música de las culturas latinas tiene dos características en común: el buen ritmo y la capacidad de ser sumamenteailable.

El ritmo es la base de la música latina y su cautivadora cadencia ha atravesado límites de tiempo y de diferentes culturas para influir la música que todos escuchamos. La música latina ha ido modificándose a

través del tiempo al incorporar elementos del jazz, rock, soul, funk, hip hop y pop entre otros, sin embargo, su irresistible ritmo ha permanecido como una constante musical.

En esta colección, exploramos nuevas mezclas funky de música latina en las que ritmos electrónicos y de hip hop, remixes de DJ y ritmos de vanguardia, se fusionan con cumbia colombiana, son cubano, banda mexicana, flamenco español, música con raíces afroperuanas, pop tropical y demás.

Moneda Dura Goza

Led by Nassiry Lugo, Moneda Dura (which means "Hard Currency" in Spanish) was founded by students at the University of Havana in 1997. The band draws from a wide variety of flavors, ranging from alternative rock, pop, reggae, and funk with an underpinning of Cuban *son*, *salsa*, and *trova*. Lugo writes all of the songs, which deal with the day-to-day experiences of young people in Cuba today. Moneda Dura has released four albums and earned huge success at home and abroad, especially in Europe where the band tours regularly.

"Goza" (Enjoy) appeared on Moneda Dura's 2004 release *Callejero* and features the voice of the late Ibrahim Ferrer, a member of the world-famous Buena Vista Social Club. The song, which musically echoes the bass and *tres* guitar lines of "Chan Chan", one of Cuba's most recognizable songs, is a warning to people who are unable to let go of a failing marriage and move on with their lives. "Enjoy, that way life is more flavorful / Don't wait around, enjoy your life."

Charanga Cakewalk La Cumbia Lounge

Born and raised near Houston, Texas, pianist and composer Michael Ramos grew up listening to an eclectic mix of Mexican, Cuban, country and rock music. He moved to Austin in 1980 and quickly became an in-demand session player, recording and/or touring with John Mellencamp, Paul Simon, the Rembrandts and Patty Griffin, among others. He was also a core member of the BoDeans.

Throughout his forays into rock, pop and folk music, Ramos kept the Latin music he grew up with close to his heart. In 2004, he realized his dream of creating a musical fusion that represented his diverse interests by producing the album *Loteria de la Cumbia Lounge* under the moniker Charanga Cakewalk. He followed up this well-received debut with two more albums that explore new directions in Latin grooves.

As the title implies, "La Cumbia Lounge" blends the bouncy cumbia rhythm, originally from Colombia but popular across Latin America, with slinky electronic beats and effects. "I'm working hard all day long, non-stop / But when the night comes I know where I'll be going / The beat? of the *cumbia*, I'm already dancing."

Profetas Chocolate

Based in Bogotá, Colombia, Profetas is the duo of African singer Antombo Langangui and Colombian MC Pablo Fortaleza. Since they came together in 1997, Profetas has been creating accessible, upbeat and funky blends of Latin grooves and African beats with ample doses of hip hop, reggae, pop, rock and R&B. Their catchy sounds have earned them fans in Europe as well. Their first album, *Amor y Fortaleza* (Love and Strength), helped build their foundation of fans, and with their most recent release in 2011, *Baila* (Dance), Profetas seeks to bring their catchy, positive sounds to new audiences around the globe.

On "Chocolate", Langangui, who is originally from Gabon, provides strident vocals that are a nice counterpart to the baritone singing and laid back rap of Fortaleza. "Your kisses are like chocolate / I melt like chocolate / Oh, how rich is the pleasure of your love / My mouth waters just thinking about you."

Jontre Locuraleza

Jontre, a singer and songwriter from Medellín, Colombia, performs an appealing blend of Latin, Caribbean and African sounds. This upbeat, commercialized approach to Colombian roots music has been popularized by Colombian artist such as Carlos Vives, Juanes, Fonseca and others and has come to be known as "tropipop", or tropical pop. Unlike these stars, however, Jontre has maintained independent control over his career, releasing albums on his own label rather than with a large multinational, producing his own videos, managing his own social media and fan communication and serving as a great case study for the modern Do It Yourself artist in the digital age.

While this has kept Jontre from the same level of international fame as some other tropipop stars, it has enabled him to record the music he wants in his own way and build a loyal grassroots following. With three albums under his belt, Jontre is poised for even greater fame, especially if he keeps producing catchy songs like "Locuraleza". An ode to seduction, Jontre sings "I know what you want me to do to you / But I'm afraid I'll drive you crazy."

Digitano Así Sin Querer

Digitano, a Spanish musical project that takes traditional flamenco in cutting-edge directions, is the brainchild of DJ and producer Juanjo Valmorisco. A veteran of Spanish groups PVP, Abuelas Fumadoras, Antonio Flores and Nilo MC, Valmorisco was nominated for a GRAMMY 2002 and has remixed songs by UB 40, Sean Paul and Navajita Plateá. With his alter ego Digitano (a fusion of the words "digital" and "gitano" or "Gypsy"), Valmorisco maintains the raw passion and earthy authenticity of pure flamenco while blending it with electronic music and hip hop. Digitano's albums feature vocals by some of the most famous names in the flamenco music, including Antonio Carmona (leader of the pioneering flamenco-fusion group Ketama), Tomasito, Eva Durán, Elena Andújar, El Falo and Nono García.

"Así Sin Querer" features the R&B vocals of Spanish-Guinean singer Dnoé backed by emotional flamenco vocal inspirations, handclaps, acoustic guitar, subtle electronic beats and vinyl scratching. "Keep this between you and me / Let me confess to you that I was too hard / Whatever is yours is yours / What must be done is in the palm of your hand."

Edesio Echale Guarapo

A veteran composer of music for film and theater in Cuba, Edesio Alejandro has devoted himself in recent years to reinterpreting classic Afro-Cuban music and giving it a modern twist. He works often with singer Adriano Rodríguez, an elderly master of old-school Cuban *son*, the influential style that is one of the foundations of contemporary salsa. Edesio uses funky electronic beats and effects as an underpinning to Rodríguez's rootsy, soulful vocals.

"Échale Guarapo" (Throw in Some Sugar Cane Juice) sounds like something legendary blind son singer Arsenio Rodríguez might have recorded if he had access to drum machines and synthesizers back in the 1940s. The song's title is a twist on the classic song "Échale Salsita", which many people theorize was the first to associate music with salsa...and the term stuck. While sweet replaces spicy in this rendition, the goal of getting people to dance remains the same. "Throw in some sugar cane juice / Come closer, woman and move with me."

Grupo Lokito Guajira

The UK-based Grupo Lokito specializes in the exhilarating fusion of African and Latin music. Inspired by the Cuban-influenced Congolese rumba that first filled nightclubs in the Belgian Congo in the 1950s, Grupo Lokito was founded by British salsa pianist and arranger Sara McGuinness in London and released its debut album, *Esengo Ya Ko Bina* (The Joy of Dancing), in 2010.

A *guajira* is a Cuban musical style that evokes the spirit of the countryside. Typically a slow, sparse style with a three-chord pattern played in tenths, the style became popular with West African musicians, notably Orchestra Baobab of Senegal. In "Guajira", Grupo Lokito have taken this Cuban musical form and transported it to the very heart of Africa; superimposing Congolese guitar style on the typical Cuban piano bass and percussion.

The song is interspersed with vocal improvisations in Lingala. "I let myself rock to the sound of your voice / When I am in your arms / Your smile brings joy to my life / Come and dance with me, dance to my *guajira*."

Sola Rosa Del Ray

Andrew Spraggon, a guitarist, singer and producer from New Zealand who first became known for his work with the rock band Cicada in the 1990s, formed Sola Rosa in 1999. Originally a solo studio project, Sola Rosa has gradually grown into a full-fledged band with musicians culled from the cream of the New Zealand music scene. With a catchall sound encompassing the best of hip hop, reggae, jazz, Latin, soul and funk, Sola Rosa has released six critically acclaimed albums.

"Del Ray" appeared on Sola Rosa's 2009 release *Get it Together*, which took three years to produce and featured the tight playing of the Sola Rosa band, a roster of international guests, and the masterful studio wizardry of Spraggon. It offers a laid back mix of mariachi trumpets, hip hop beats, wavy Southwestern guitar riffs, and eerie Theremin accents that sounds like something you might hear in a modern-day Spaghetti Western.

Calle 66 Cuqui Quédate Donde Estás

A musical project spearheaded by Italian producer Ivan Falardi, Calle 66 brought together young musicians from Havana's bubbling music scene in 2005. The goal was to showcase some of the city's best young talents and give them the opportunity to record original songs inspired by tradition but updated with contemporary sounds popular on the streets today.

"Quédate Donde Estás" (Stay Where You Are) features the singer Dacmielis Cardenas Arrieta, who, thankfully, goes by the easier to pronounce name Cuqui (Kooky). Just 22 years-old at the time the album was recorded, Cuqui studied piano, voice and percussion. When she was 17 one of her compositions was recorded by the hugely popular *timba* band Bamboleo. She has continued to write songs for many of Cuba's biggest bands and wrote all of the songs featured on the Calle 66 album. On "Quédate Donde Estás" Cuqui sings, "Stay where you are, relaxed over there / The rumba isn't like it was yesterday."

Sarazino & Andrea Ruilova Pelo Shao

Sarazino is the brainchild of Lamine Fellah, a musician, songwriter and producer whose nomadic life is reflected in the multicultural influences in his songs. Fellah is a true child of a globalized world and Sarazino's music draws on reggae, Latin and African grooves, Arabic music and catchy, international pop to create an upbeat celebration of the diverse world we all share. Born in Algeria, raised in West Africa, schooled in Montreal and now based in Quito, Ecuador, Fellah has collaborated with Toots Hibbert from Toots and the Maytals, reggae star Pato Banton, Sierra Leone's Refugee All Stars, Luísa Maita from Brazil and many others.

On "Pelo Shao", a new song on the soon-to-be-released album *Everyday Salama*, Sarazino teams up with singer Andrea Ruilova for a Brazilian axé inspired anthem about overcoming life's challenges. "I am burdened with dreams / That I carry from childhood / I look back and suddenly / I feel lost / I will travel against the current / Saving my life / I will wait for luck / With the light on."

Mariposa Solar Bonita Mente-Bonita Suerte

Colombia's Mariposa Solar calls her sound ElectroPopKlore because of its blend of electronica, pop and folklore. Born in Bogotá, Colombia in 1979, Solar's passion for music was equaled by her fascination with yoga and mantras and their connection to native Colombian spiritualism, chants and philosophy. Solar has developed music therapy workshops to explore the self-healing power of song. Her recordings fuse rock, funk, *bossa nova*, trip hop, electronica and pop with rhythms such as Colombian *cumbia*, *porro*, *currulao*, *loropo*, *bullerengue* and more.

"Bonita Mente-Bonita Suerte" (Beautiful Mind – Beautiful Luck) is from her debut album *Volando en la Vía Láctea* (Flying in the Milky Way), which was released in 2008. "I want beautiful luck to come my way / To fly to the other side / The beautiful mind / Of my heart / I will cry no more." (DS: Translation seems to not quite make sense) Solar is currently working on her second album, *Calendula*, which explores the healing power of plants and her experiences with traditional indigenous rituals.