

Andres Calamaro – Obras Incompleta 6 CD's (2009)

Written by bluelover

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Disc 1 1. Alta suciedad 2. El salmón 3. Los chicos 4. Paloma 5. Loco 6. Carnaval de Brasil 7. Flaca 8. 5 minutos más (minibar) 9. Te quiero igual 10. Crímenes perfectos 11. Tuyo siempre 12. Estadio Azteca 13. Mi gintonic 14. Maradona 15. El Palacio de las Flores 16. Jugar con fuego 17. Soy tuyo 18. Lorena

Disc 2 1. Comida china 2. La parte de adelante 3. Me arde 4. El día de la mujer mundial 5. El viejo 6. Corazón en venta 7. Más duele 8. Patas de rana 9. Cada una de tus cosas 10. La libertad 11. Naranja en flor 12. Tengo una orquídea 13. El día que me quieras 14. Qué ritmo triste 15. Jugando al límite 16. Con Abuelo 17. No tan Buenos Aires 18. Mi bandera

Disc 3

1. Carne picada 2. Milonga del trovador 3. Todo lo demás 4. Ansia en Plaza Francia 5. Para seguir 6. Hacer el tonto 7. Clonazepán y circo 8. Como dos extraños 9. No son horas 10. Donde manda marinero 11. Rumbo errado (versión inédita) 12. All u need is pop Big Simon remix 13. Mi funeral 14. Nostalgias 15. Revolución turra (versión inédita) 16. Algún lugar encontraré 17. Los aviones 18. Media Verónica 19. El cantante

Disc 4

1. Bachicha 2. De la lluvia 3. Colegio de animales 4. Cuatro jinetes 5. Mal en mí 6. El ascensor 7. No tiene perdón 8. Ranchada de los paraguayos 9. Media Verónica 10. Qué clase de rico será 11. Blues de hoy 12. Perdiendo el tiempo 13. Las cosas que me ayudan a olvidar 14. Loco por ti (en vivo) 15. Los demonios 16. El gallego 17. El mago Merlín 18. El otro lado del viento

Disc 5

1. Hop de realidad 2. De mi esperanza 3. Astoria 4. Sí, quiero 5. Duermen los niños 6. Mosaico aleccionador 7. House degradation 8. Uruguayo sin termo 9. New Zappa 10. Mono de Kubrik 11. Cookie man 12. La verdad congelada 13. Free Loop 14. Pobre pibe 15. MVP 16. Rivothriller 17. Manifiesto común 18. Vivir de pie (otro para Lili)

Disc 6

1. Desconfío 2. Veneno en la piel 3. Rock de la mujer perdida 4. Un vestido y un amor (en vivo) 5. Contigo 6. Nunca lo sabrán 7. Adagio en mi país 8. Cafetín de Buenos Aires 9. Nada (en vivo) 10. El día que me quieras 11. Obsesión 12. Resolution 13. Always on my mind 14. Josie 15. Wish you were here 16. Golden slumbers 17. Tomorrow night (en vivo) 18. Helter Skelter

Perhaps surprising no one more than himself, the late 2000s found Andrés Calamaro widely regarded as the greatest living Spanish-language rock songwriter alive. Calamaro's entire career is as remarkable as it is convoluted. For starters, he managed a rare feat for a Spanish rock artist: he became a top star in his own country, Argentina, and Spain, as well as Latin America. A mind-boggling Phoenix, Calamaro has resurrected his career more times than anyone cares to remember, always coming back stronger than ever. His notorious drug abuse problems and celebrated rehabilitation aside, he has repeatedly compromised his industry reputation as a hitmaking machine by releasing scores of defiantly anti-commercial projects, such as the by-now mythical five-CD *El Salmón* -- allegedly the longest running studio album of previously unreleased material by a single artist in pop music history. This is a man whose recording output makes someone like Frank Zappa or Prince look restrained. True to form, Calamaro decided to celebrate ten years of typically hectic musical activity, from 1997's *Alta Suciedad* to 2007's *El Palacio de las Flores*, with the release of *Andrés: Obras Incompletas*, a mammoth six-CD/two-DVD compilation box set. The title alone, "Incomplete Works," gives away the set's main weakness: despite its exorbitant length (and consequent price tag), it is by no means an all-inclusive portrait of the artist. It leaves out a good 15 essential years of the Andrés Calamaro story, including his stints with the seminal and hugely popular bands *los Abuelos de la Nada* in the early '80s, and *los Rodriguez* in the early '90s, his first four solo albums (among these is 1989's *Nadie Sale Vivo de Aquí*, arguably his definitive masterpiece), and his first two collections of rarities. This is all the more regrettable considering that the deluxe box set treatment is unprecedented in Argentine rock history. When the first one finally comes along, six discs and all, it turns out to be considerably less than comprehensive. On the other hand, boasting sterling audio quality, glamorous Soviet-style artwork, and a 184-pages book with lyrics and comments for every track, the deluxe qualification is beyond doubt.

The set is organized in a number of ways, some of which are smart and some debatable. The first three discs contain a selection from all of Calamaro's official albums from the period. These 55 tracks include all of the hits, key album tracks, and a few hard to find items, such as selections from the soundtrack of the Argentine film *Caballos Salvajes*. The material, however, is not presented in chronological or any other discernible order. What this ultimately does is scatter the classics from Calamaro's most commercially successful work with selections from his darker albums, so as to make the extreme changes in mood (and, let's face it, in quality, too) less noticeable. Presumably, this non-linear approach would also prevent listeners from preferring one disc over the others, as they are forced to face the chaotic universe of Andrés Calamaro's creativity as a whole, rather than as a series of ups and downs. The remaining three discs, however, take a different route. These are again 55 songs, but all are previously unreleased, and provide the outlet for Calamaro's seemingly non-stop home recording activity in the manner of his previous rarities collection, *Grabaciones Encontradas*. Several of the tracks will be familiar to some fans, since Calamaro has been posting them on his website over the years, in projects such as *Deep Camboya* or *Radio Salmón Vaticano*, although they're perhaps different versions, and certainly the audio is far superior here. Contrary to the design of Calamaro's rarities collections of the past, the box set makes a point of dividing the unreleased

material along the three main lines of Calamaro's home recordings: songs, jams, and covers. It should be noted that Calamaro's leftovers and experiments are often fun and interesting, but almost by rule nowhere as good as the finished product that makes its way onto the studio albums. True, while there are a few gems waiting to be unburied in discs four to six, it is tacitly understood that this material is meant for Calamaro's friends and diehards only. Disc four is by far the most interesting, as it consists of what Calamaro does best: writing perfect genre songs in any conceivable style: pop, rock, blues, folk, ballads, you name it. Actually, disc four can easily be considered a new Calamaro album, as good as any of his good-but-not-great albums such as *El Cantante* or *El Palacio de las Flores*. Disc five, on the other hand, will try the patience of most listeners with its assortment of sonic experiments that showcase Calamaro's restless musical curiosity and studio wizardry before they are tamed by his peerless pop instinct. Disc six, finally, presents another of Calamaro's hobbies, covering songs by his favorite artists. These are mostly from the classic rock era (both Argentine and English or American), including such diverse acts as the Beatles, Elvis Presley, Los Gatos, or Pappo, and also tango singers and Spanish acts such as Radio Futura and Joaquín Sabina. As usual, Calamaro's versions are as respectful and pleasant as they are inessential, with the possible exception of his duet with flamenco cantaor Diego el Cigala for the Latin standard "Obsesión." Much like his cover of Dylan (one of Calamaro's idols), these covers are good, but one cannot help but wonder why such a consummate and unique songwriter would bother with other people's material, or why anyone should bother listening to it.

All in all, though, *Obras Incompletas* is a sprawling, lavish set that cannot be recommended without some limitations. For Calamaro fans, the true value of this set probably lies in the two DVDs of concerts, interviews, and behind the scenes footage, since video material of Calamaro has rarely been commercially available. Those unfamiliar with Calamaro, on the other hand, are best advised to seek out his best studio albums. In spite of Calamaro's self-denial, literally dozens of songs (many included here) offer irrefutable evidence of his fully deserving the title of one of rock's greatest songwriters of the past two decades -- in any language. In spite of its intimidating cost, *Obras Incompletas* reached number three on the Spanish charts upon its release, something totally unprecedented for a compilation of this magnitude. It is likely that the set will be split up for its release in different markets. In Argentina, for instance, it was offered in four different configurations: the entire box set, a double set of the two DVDs, a double set comprising the first CD and the first DVD, and a single-disc edition of the first CD. The rarities discs, however, were not made available individually, thus making it impossible to have the previously unreleased material without purchasing the whole thing. When Calamaro was asked whether he was going to plead a case of "temporary insanity" about the inappropriate timing of such a release in these deflated economic times, and the music business in particular, he replied that he resented the use of the word "temporary" with typical panache. Ladies and gentlemen, Andrés Calamaro in a nutshell. May he live to be 100. ---Mariano Prunes, Rovi

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