Putumayo Presents Cafe Cubano (2008)



1. José Conde y Ola Fresca • El Chacal 2. Ignacio "Mazacote" Carrillo • Lágrimas Negras 3. Pedro Luis Ferrer feat. Lena Ferrer • Ay, Mi Vidita 4. René Ferrer • Como A Cada Manana 5. La Orquesta Mágica De La Habana • Morenita 6. Germán Obregón • Pincel Campesino 7. Armando Garzón • Escándalo 8. Asere • Corazón 9. Félix Baloy • Después de esta Noche 10. Kelvis Ochoa • Fué Una de Mambo

Moving along their trail of café music from around the world, Putumayo put together a compilation of relaxed, sentimental Cuban music that packs a pretty serious punch. There are a few heavy hitters on the album, but very few will have any name recognition outside of a few dedicated aficionados. After an opening track from Miami-based José Condé, Afro-Cuban All Star Ignacio Carrillo dusts off a beautiful old Miguel Matamoros number with a perfect tone. Pedro Luis Ferrer (now making a name on the world market) contributes a number, as does Rene Ferrer, with an outstandingly touching bit of nueva trova. After a quick Buena Vista-style piece featuring Adriano Rodriguez, German Obregón contributes a lilting guajira, with its characteristic string work. Armando Garzón's bolero evokes the nightclub exoticism of the 1950s, the younger Asere contribute a mix of bolero and son, and one more bolero in the vein of a Beny Moré track brings the album up to the end of the classic stylings. To finish off the rounds, Kelvis Ochoa presents something more in the realm of the singer/songwriter style gaining ground in Cuba bit by bit. It's a completely relaxed album, and a completely relaxing one, with outstanding musical quality throughout. This isn't the Buena Vista Social Club sound that many may be expecting from a compilation of Cuban music -- there is very little son, and essentially no rhumba. Just plenty of soul. ---Adam Greenberg, Rovi

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