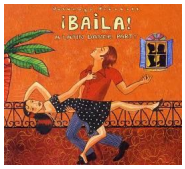
Putumayo Presents: Baila - A Latin Dance Party (2006)



1 –Raul Paz Mua Mua Mua 2:40 2 –Africando All Stars Son Fo 4:48 3 –La-33 Que Rico Boogaloo 3:48 4 –Gabriel Rios Bones Bugalú 3:18 5 –Spanish Harlem Orchestra Escucha El Ritmo 5:50 6 –Calle Real Hoah 4:08 7 –Ricardo Lemvo And Makina Loca Mama Kiyelele 3:52 8 –Los Pinguos Tierra Santa 3:25 9 –NG La Banda La Cachimba 2:23 10 –Yerba Buena El Burrito 3:56 11 –Brooklyn Funk Essentials Mambo Con Dancehall 2:46

Putumayo's bread and butter lies in Latin releases, and as they get bigger they also seem to get better at picking out a proper variety that can meld together into a coherent compilation while still retaining the ideal of being particularly worldly. Here, they do it again with an omnipresent groove. The pieces here clump pretty closely around the Cuban styles, but the bands are as far flung as one would expect from Putumayo. The album opens with a slick number from Raul Paz, a Cuban living in Paris. Senegalese son follows quickly, performed flawlessly. Soon these are followed by a contemporary version of a boogaloo (with hints of Rob Thomas perhaps?), a proper old-school salsa, and some updated timba (from Sweden, no less). The first departure from straightforward Cuban sounds doesn't come until midway through the album, with the addition of a soukous motive mixed into a strong salsa from Ricardo Lemvo (and largely in Lingala!). Right after that though, the departures from Cuba becomes stronger, with los Pinguos, who slyly convert a bit of Argentine folk into reggae, and then into a more Cuban sound. The album finishes with a collection of more contemporary versions -- NG la Banda plays some more timba, Yerba Buena updates the New York sound a bit, and Brooklyn Funk Essentials incorporate whatever they like. It's a nice album overall. The parts don't always make sense separately, but they fit together stylistically into a journey of Cuban music paradoxically more separable into time frames than into geographical frames. ---Adam Greenberg, Rovi

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