

most a genre unto himself, at least in terms of leadership; his son carries that weighty torch with strength here. The unplugged desert rhythms, and yes, blues. Father appears on two songs, giving his blessing, as it were. Kora master Toumani Diabate adds his own, and the son is likely responsible for bringing in a bit of reggae beat and things like that, carrying forth his legendary father's legacy while already making his own way.

The Rough Guide to the Music of South Africa (World Music Network): Can't hardly go wrong with select cuts from Mahlathini and the Mahotella Queens, Miriam Makeba (an oldie, with the Skylarks), Lucky Dube, the Soul Brothers, and a concluding Ladysmith song, but the other 11 artists presented here are no slouches in this consistently engaging and high-energy (other than a string quartet cut, which is still nice) survey of at least a half-dozen distinct musical styles and then some. From the 1930s to now, this is a fine dip of the toe into the riches of the continent's Southern tip.

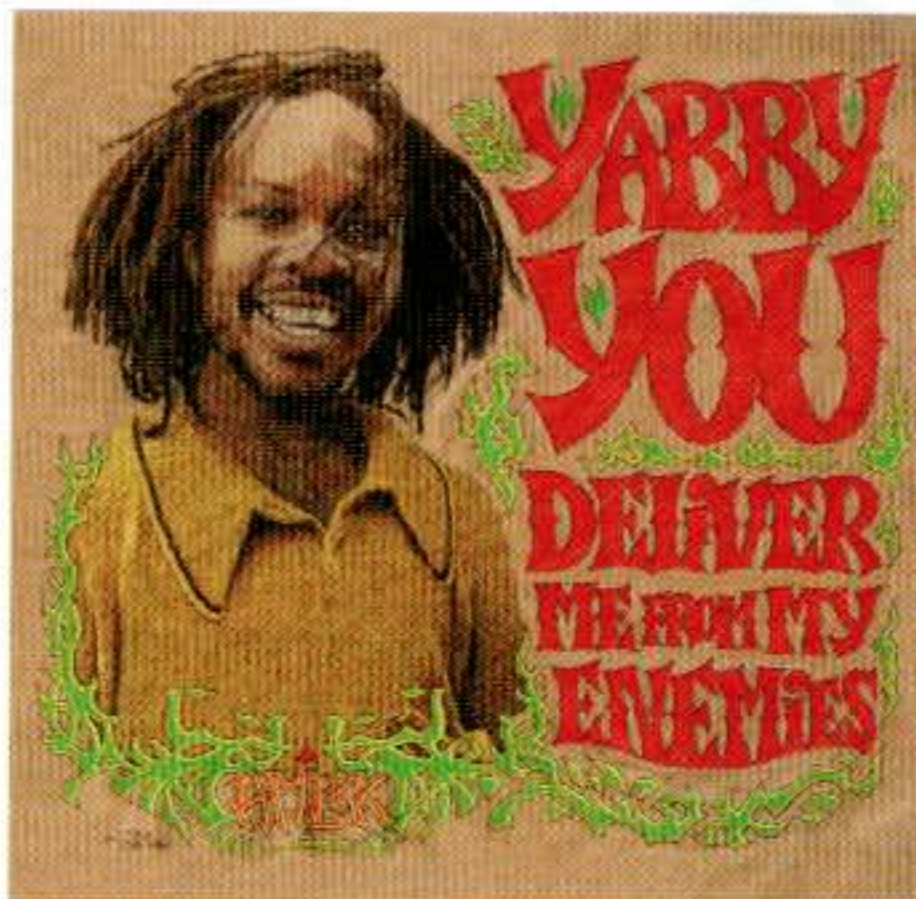
Americas, Central and South

Marisa Monte, *Infinito Particular/Universo Ao Meu Redor* (Metro Blue): As an early champion of Monte's wonderful singing and songs on her first three releases in these Northern climes, I was sad to lose interest in more recent years. Now she's back with these twin cds, which are being heralded as a comeback for those who lost track and as a breakthrough for gringos new to her. And great they are. *Universo* is the "samba" one, kicking off with a title tune featuring living legend Paulinho da Viola on guitar and *cavaquinho*, so it's blessed from the start and stays that way, showing that she can outdo even somebody with a name like, say, Bebel, at her own game. *Infinito* is more in the modernized vein of her landmark earlier work, and while maybe not as impactful, perhaps due to a mostly low-key approach or to some novelty wear-down factor, still most agreeable. So very very nice to have this particular superstar diva back and in such fine form.

Lula Cortes e Ze Ramalho, *Paebiru* (Shadoks/Normal): This collectible Brazilian gem was seemingly first released in 1975, when all seemed possible—in music, at least. It's a searching, stunning document of adventuresome musicians stretching boundaries into jazz, folkloric, "new music," acid rock and beyond, indescribable, really, from scary to beautiful, sometimes at the same time. I'd heard of Ramalho only, and don't know anything more other than that this is a keeper, sitar sounds ("guitarra nervosa") and all.

Tutty Moreno featuring Joyce, *Magica* (Far Out): From Rio in 1981, a drummer-led breezy, flute-filled Brazilian jazz outing. Fender Rhodes galore. A bit "lite jazz" for my ears but still with that tropicalia charm.

Democustico (Far Out): Yet more fine female



vocalizing from Brazil; this time by Gabriela Geluda, who with bassist/keyman Mauro Berman seem to lead this contemporary unit, which uses more electronics than their name might imply. They go for the seductive, tropical sound, and find it.

Andy Palacio and the Garifuna Collective, *Watina* (Cumbancha): From the Caribbean coast of Central America, led by Belizean star Palacio, here comes a real winning hybrid of Latin, African and yes, Caribbean elements into a moving, grooving whole. It's (past) deadline time here and I've only just begun to absorb the variety, passion and creativity which is immediately apparent on this disc. Likely a "best-of-year" contender for '07.

Moro No Brasil (Milan dvd): This is a tour and search for the roots of samba, made by a European who loves the whole of Brazilian music. Lots of good footage of village dances, carnival, *favela* culture, and more, with some performance by Seu Jorge, among others. Some stirring stories by Jorge and others (Funk N' Lata, etc) of perseverance amidst poverty. And lots of beauty of all kinds.

Onward

Stop the War Coalition Benefit Concert (MVD dvd): If only Rachid Taha, Brian Eno and some of the other fine musicians on this 2005 London concert could in fact stop that damn war. Oh well. Hearing/seeing the Clash's Mick Jones join in for a rousing version of "Rock the Casbah" was some consolation.

Phi Ta Khon: Ghosts of Ison (Sublime Frequencies dvd): This documents "Thailand's Psychedelic Ghost Festival," three days of dancing and music in some very wild costumes. "Endless addictive molan music" is featured too, and this is indeed a very exotic (sorry, but it's true) trip (sorry, but...). A Southeast Asian Woodstockian rave, wow.

Edip Akbayram (Shadoks/Normal): This Turkish guitarist sure heard lots of Pink Floyd and so

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