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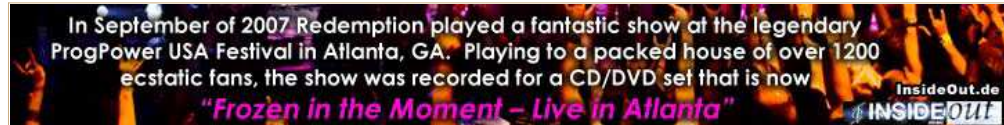
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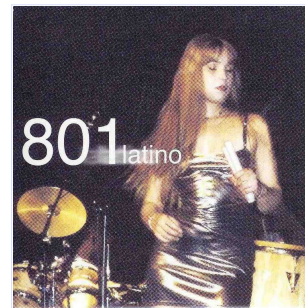
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801: Latino

Continuing with the 801 releases is *Latino*, recorded live in Newark in 1999. This time around Manzanera surrounded himself with a group of talented young Cuban musicians including Augusto Enriquez (lead vocals), Aldo Lopez Gavilan (electric piano), Carlos Valdez (drums, percussion), Yamile (lead vocals, percussion) and Chucho Merchan (bass, backing vocals, percussion). Judging



from the line-up its no surprise the music is predominantly Cuban with folk, jazz and South American influences. This is not progressive music in the slightest but it is well executed and occasionally a Roxy Music moment appears out of the blue. The musicianship is first rate and I must give kudos to the piano playing of Aldo Gavilan as he excels throughout the entire CD. The finesse he demonstrates on the ivories is terrific adding subtle flourishes and jazzy motifs stamping every song with his signature style. As a matter of fact, all of these musicians delivery nothing but quality on their chosen instruments.

There is a feel good vibe here that is hard to ignore and Manzanera shows his versatility by tackling a genre far removed from progressive rock and doing it very well. My favourite songs include the progressive flavoured "La Noche/Corcovado" with its cool bass riff and excellent drum work and the Roxy Music influenced "Rayo De Bala", taking on a sort of Cubanized Avalon approach, heavy on atmospheric textures and rippling piano keys. The rest of the album takes a similar path with the Latin rhythms coming at you like a cool island breeze.

This is a classy album and one which I was quite surprised by. If you like to try something different every now and again and the music of the Caribbean floats your boat, *Latino* may be right up your alley.

Track Listing:

1. Castellano (Que bueno baila usted) (3:10)
2. Mama Hue (3:42)
3. Yolanda (5:09)
4. Son De La Loma (4:19)
5. El Bodeguero (4:02)