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Chucho Valdés Featuring Irakere – Latin Jazz Founders

Picture: C Sound: C Extras: C+
 Documentary: B



Jesus "Chucho" Valdés founded Irakere, a landmark band that made priceless contributions to Jazz and Latino Music. Ilena Rodriguez's new documentary about the band and the genius pianist who formed it runs nearly two hours and never runs out of fans, band members or other talented musicians who have been involved with Valdés. Mostly in Spanish with English subtitles, **Chucho Valdés Featuring Irakere – Latin Jazz Founders** (2004) is a key work in understanding the music, culture, and origins of vital music in a genre that finally exploded in the last ten years.

Some parts are missing subtitles, but it is in brief sections, though I wondered if I missed anything vital. Otherwise, it is a good show, though some of the footage is not in the best shape however archival. What was most interesting was the feeling that something that might have felt more distant ten years ago seems mainstream, meaning that thanks to artists like Valdés, the world is finally catching up with some of its greatest music. This work confirms that.

The 1.33 X 1 image is soft throughout, despite the more recent tapings, while many shots are actually letterboxed 16 X 9/1.78 X 1. For some of the older footage, that could be expected, but the lack of fidelity on the newer footage makes one wonder if the older footage might be in better shape. The Dolby Digital 2.0 is sometimes stereo, but often monophonic and has a sense of compression throughout, including in the extras. Extras include complete music performances of *San Francisco*, *Juana 1600*, *La Mollnarla* and *Dinorah*, *Dinorah* that appeared in the body of the documentary. Music fans will enjoy that bonus.

- Nicholas Sheffo

MARKET PLACE