

## FAME Review: Corroncho - Corroncho

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*Expression Records* - EXPD27

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A review written for the Folk & Acoustic Music Exchange  
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There's been a Phil Manzanera renaissance going on, and it couldn't happen to a more deserving and too often underserved musician. Famous for his slot as guitarist for the Roxy Music band (often just dubbed 'Roxy'), the guy has been far more prevalent than most know...except, that is, for his legion of progrock fans, of which I am happily one. The last few years have seen deluxe reissues, as well as completely new releases of old live gigs, of the 801 band, and his initial group, Quiet Sun, has even come in for remaster/rerelease treatment as well, a feat long overdue. Quiet Sun, y'all, is one of many dyed-in-the-wool progster's fave unknown bands, along with Quatermass, Pictures, Spontaneous Combustion, and a host of other way the hell cool delectations. Manzanera's another one of those cats who has a certain something impossible to quantify, but whatever it is, it's caused me and other rabid progheads to grab everything he involves himself with, including that odd Explorers gig with Andy McKay, and be immensely satisfied.

This release is, as the title indicates, a return to his Venezuelan, Colombian, and Cuban (and, for that matter, Hawaiian) roots, all places he lived after an English birth. Phil's true name is Philip Geoffrey Targett-Adams but he fell under the spell of merengue and bolero musics, the latter especially in Armando Manzanero's work, thence obtaining a new surname. As to his most celebrated gig with Roxy Music, he first lost out to The Nice's Davy O'List, signing on as roadie instead...until O'List had a fracas with drummer Paul Thompson and ousted himself. Manzanera secretly learned the group's entire repertoire and, while being asked to mix the sound in studio on an upcoming LP, amazed the members with his six-string work and became the new permanent axeman. From accidents, what wonders occur.

**Corroncho** (in Caribe referring to being slow and sluggish [torpe], in the Andes meaning difficult and prickly) is slightly pejorative, an epithet laid on Caribbean Coast-ers by Bogotans, and refers here to a couple of buddies and their adventures in life. Lucho Brieva is a sculptor-artist who sings and plays piano as Phil wields his axe, and an boatload of very well known guests sit in: Annie Lennox, Robert Wyatt, Chrissie Hind, and several others, including a gent known in political circles for his immense wit and anarchic tendencies: Gilad Atzmon, also very respected in jazz music.

**Corroncho** is not progressive as such...but is anyway. A combination of elements of the aforementioned styles as well as cumbia, salsa, pop, ballads, chillout, and even—or so I say, dammit!—bits of ranchero. There's a sparkling vivacity here that forces the various styles to transcend themselves while honoring each and every one. Lots of south of the border swing gets the feet moving and the head bobbing, and *Suavecito*, my prime pick, is particularly captivating, making the listener want to form a rhumba line and shake his or her can after an arm's length row of shots of tequila. Every song is encanted in Spanish, but don't even begin to worry about that if you don't hablar 'cause it would've been almost violently wrong to have put English into the affair. The Hispanic languages are probably the most musical in the world, and none of that is lost here. The strangest part of it all is that I am for some reason reminded of the old Jan Akkerman / Kaz Lux LP, *Eli*. **Corroncho** isn't at all like that obscure release, but there's an experiential underpinning that seems to reach across in the most bizarre way...or maybe I need my head examined. Probably the latter.

### Track List:

- Lowrider (Willie Colon)
- Complicada (Hynde / Seymour)
- Rosa (Irenes Martines)
- Para ti Nengon (Manzanera / Brieva)
- Suavecito (Manzanera / Brieva)
- Angeles y Lobos (Manzanera / Brieva)
- Etsa Vida Prerstada (Manzanera / Brieva)
- Cancion Para la Que Sea (Manzanera / Brieva)
- Noche de Putas (Manzanera / Brieva)
- Tu Juventud (Bob Dylan)
- Coyote (Manzanera / Brieva)
- Diario (Goyes / Brieva / Manzanera)

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