



Press Release

Cumbiamuffin S/T

Peace & Rhythm / Hyperopia / Sounds & Colours

Vinyl LP / Digital album

Release date: 1 July, 2022



Infectious, hypnotic tropical grooves with a ragga kick from Australia's premier cumbia orchestra. If you like Ondatrópica, Frente Cumbiero, Ska Cubano and Lucho Bermúdez, you'll love Cumbiamuffin.

It was only a matter of time before cumbia hit Australia. After humbly coming to life on Colombia's Caribbean coast, this rhythm—and everything it represents: its multi-ethnicity, its danceable pulse, its resilience—snaked its way up the mountains to reach Colombia's urban capitals, Bogotá and Medellín, who transmitted the signal to Mexico, Peru, Argentina... Cumbia travelled, and wherever it landed it took hold; Charles Mingus got his fill in the 70s, Mexicans brought it across the US border in the 80s, Joe Strummer couldn't get enough of it in the 90s; and wherever it landed, it has shown its flexibility, its ability to adapt to new environments.

Cumbiamuffin are the perfect example of what happens when cumbia arrives in a completely different continent. Since forming in 2010, they have become Australia's

premier large format cumbia orchestra, offering a twist on the genre that no one saw coming. They take their inspiration from cumbia's brass band traditions, when the genre was adopted by orchestras in the 1940s, the start of its golden age, but they do not stop there. They also look further afield, to the big bands of Mexico and Peru, and even to the Caribbean, which is how their name came about. Cumbiamuffin represents the contraction of two musical styles that the group seamlessly bring together in one big, vibrant, joyous experience: cumbia and raggamuffin reggae. This is a group that can inject even more life into a bona fide Colombian classic like Lucho Bermudez's "Salsipuedes," take a Greek club version of a Mexican *banda* track written by an Argentine accordionist and come up with the cohesively international "Ritmo de Sinaloa," and then there's that unmistakable ragga skank all over "La Promesa," with "La Cabezona" being an instrumental *descarga* that has no right to rumble so low, designed with dance halls and sound systems in mind.

Armed with the collective energy of two authentic Colombian vocalists, a seriously massive brass section, heavy bass, funky guitar, salsa piano and equally authentic percussion, the 15-piece band combines elements of reggae, dancehall and roots from the Colombian Caribbean in a deft mix that is both retro and futuristic, authentically traditional and yet also experimental. Put together by a collective of Colombian and Australian musicians, the project has the common vision of introducing the purest sounds of the golden era of orchestrated cumbia to Australian audiences, but with a little something more added to the formula to keep things fresh.

Having triumphantly conquered their home country's competitive music scene with sold out shows at numerous festivals and well-known venues all over Down Under, Cumbiamuffin are poised to break out to a global audience with their debut self-titled LP.

The Story Behind The Album

A lot of virtual connections were made during the pandemic, especially in the first year when it was much harder to travel and engage with the rest of the world physically. This was true in all aspects of life, and within the music industry, especially for independent record labels like Peace & Rhythm, it was no different. Though concerts, record fairs and DJ gigs had dried up and stores and concert venues had closed with no sign of light at the end of the tunnel, the label was in constant contact with a virtual network of musical friends both old and new, from DJs and store owners to musicians and writers. During those dark days of lockdown, a number of bands contacted Peace & Rhythm with projects, inquiring whether the label wanted to collaborate and release new recordings. Several of these artists were international and were unknown to the label. During this time, mutual friends in Colombia put Peace & Rhythm together with Cumbiamuffin, a large tropical band from Australia that had recorded a number of songs. Impressed, we decided it was only right that these tracks should be released, and together we began reaching out to remixers willing to add even more flavor to the final LP. Cumbiamuffin's Australian DJ/producer/musician colleague OYOB! was first on board. We also contacted our Canadian friends Hyperopia and UK amigos Sounds & Colours, with the idea of an international partnership for producing and releasing the

record, creating a truly Pan-Latin collaboration. Sounds & Colours, always at the forefront of discovering new talent, suggested a few other remixers and a final lineup was agreed upon. With side A made up of studio recordings, the plan was to devote the B side to remixes. In addition to OYOBI, remixes came from Prince of Queens (USA), Rizomagic (Colombia) and Turbo Sonidero (USA/Mexico). For the cover, we contacted the Colombian muralist and graffiti artist Yurika, who also happens to be a music fan and vinyl collector specializing in the tropical sounds of his country and was excited to join the project. With these elements all in place, the final piece was getting the record made, which, due to current economic and post-pandemic conditions, took far longer than expected, but now the album is complete, with vibrantly beautiful color variations to match Yurika's cover art, skillfully created by Burlington Record Plant.

Pablo Yglesias / Peace & Rhythm

About the songs:

Mocha del Barrio

Mocha literally means “missing a hand” in Spanish; in this case, the lovelorn singer feels like the amputee of the neighborhood (“el barrio”). When love vanishes, it can feel like one is missing a part of the body, a physical representation of a broken heart. The pain of this loss is like no other and hiding it is too hard, and there is no medicine to cure it. Still, time always passes, and joy always comes back.

Planeando Ando

When plans don't go how you expect, and life hands you bitter lemons, you can always make a refreshing lemonade. Only by taking a hidden journey from within will you be able to harness and value your strength. Get up, get up! Decide on doing good instead of bad!

Ritmo de Sinaloa

This jaunty instrumental tune with its bullfight trumpet intro has quite a transnational Latin pedigree, being an Australian/Colombian rearrangement of a Greek DJ's club edit of a Mexican brass “banda” recording of a composition with Colombian and Spanish roots written by an Argentinian accordionist living in Peru.

La Promesa

When a promise is made, you better remember it well. The sacrifice of joy will never be bought, money is not all, love is more. The song is a conversation on stage about the kind of promises that need to be fulfilled.

La Cabezona

When the rhythm takes your body, let it flow...from head to toes, let it go. An instrumental “descarga” (jam session) made whole from the madness of the horn section head chart. The title (literally, “Big Head”) comes from having written “Head

Chart” as a temporary tittle to the sheet music, and then realizing this song its just one exquisite big jam!

Salsipuedes

Written and arranged by Colombian composer, clarinetist and orchestra leader Lucho Bermúdez, this is an iconic tropical anthem inspired by a countryside house called Salsipuedes, which was located in the outskirts of Medellín and was renowned for being a hub to artists, musicians and bohemians in the early 20th century. As magical, entrancing and vibrant a space in Colombia as you could imagine, Salsipuedes literally translates as “Leave if you can.” Once you find yourself in the land of the eternal spring, you will become enchanted and tempted to never leave.

TRACK LISTING

01 - Mocha del Barrio 2:51

02 - Planeando Ando 3:26

03 - Ritmo de Sinaloa 2:55

04 - La Promesa 3:48

05 - La Cabezona 4:48

06 - Salsipuedes 3:19

07 - Planeando Ando (Prince of Queens Deconstruction Mix) 4:53

08 - La Promesa (OYOBI Remix) 3:49

09 - La Cabezona (Rizomagic Remix) 4:21

10 - Ritmo de Sinaloa (SLP Turbo Sonidero Remix) 4:41

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