

Yma Sumac - Ultimate Collection (2000)

Written by bluelover

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01. *Taita Inty (Virgin Of The Sun God)*
02. *Najala's Lament*
03. *Ataypura (High Andes)*
04. *Bo Mambo*
05. *Kuyaway (Inca Love Song)*
06. *Tumpa (Earthquake)*
07. *Taki Rari*
08. *Chuncho (The Forest Creatures)*
09. *Monos (Monkeys)*
10. *Suray Surita*
11. *Wanka (The Seven Winds)*
12. *Negrito Filomeno*
13. *Huayno*
14. *Inca Waltz*
15. *Babalu*
16. *Wimoweh (Mbube)*
17. *Xtabay (Lure Of The Unknown Love)*
18. *La Molina (The Mill Song)*
19. *Llora Corazon (Crying Heart) (*
20. *La Pampa Y La Puna (The Plains And The Mountains)*
21. *Virgenes Del Sol (Virgins Of The Sun)*

In 1950, at the dawn of an era of musical exotica (in which composers such as Esquivel, Martin Denny, and Les Baxter would test the limits of hi-fi strangeness), Yma Sumac entered the scene. She was a diva from the Andes with a four-vocal octave range, an unrelenting trill, and great looks, and she became an overnight sensation. Within years of her debut LP, *Voice of the Xtabay*, Sumac recorded more concept albums, starred in a Broadway musical (*Flahooley*), and appeared onscreen with Charlton Heston in 1954's *Secret of the Incas*. Truth be told, exotica

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music's popularity was short-lived (only to resurface again with the '90s lounge culture), and many would claim Yma Sumac was merely American housewife Amy Camus spelling her name backwards. No matter. This is still great, hilarious music unlike any other. With composer-husband Moises Vivanco, Sumac created a hybrid jazz, mambo, and world music that was the perfect showpiece for her vocal pyrotechnics. She scats, she trills, she bellows, but--mostly--she entertains. This disc collects Sumac's very best works, three unreleased tracks (worth hearing for the opening to "Negrito Filomino"), and extensive liner notes. --Jason Verlinde, amazon.com

The Ultimate Yma Sumac Collection may very well live up to its title; at the very least, it's likely the most comprehensive overview of her recordings yet assembled. Therefore, the question is, is it better to go with a collection (which contains three previously unreleased cuts and four rare stereo mixes) or an official album, namely her Voice of the Xtabay, which Richie Unterberger calls her "first and most popular release." Since that first album isn't quite as pop-oriented as some of the material on The Ultimate, it may seem that the collection is preferable, yet that's not really the case. Sumac is a bit of a cultural artifact, so she makes the most sense in the context; hence, the album makes a bit more sense than the compilation. However, there is very, very little overlap between Voice of the Xtabay and The Ultimate, so the collection not only functions as a nice supplement to the record, but neophytes who decide they want to sample an overview instead of diving into the proper albums will not be disappointed by repeated tracks when they go to the Voice. Any way you look at it, The Ultimate Yma Sumac Collection is a good compilation of a difficult artist to anthologize. --- Stephen Thomas Erlewine, Rovi

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