

Gotan Project – Lunatico (2006)

Written by bluelover

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1 Amor Porteño (Featuring – Calexico) 5:07 2 Notas (Voice [Spoken Word] – Juan Carlos Caceres) 4:20 3 Diferente 5:19 4 Celos 5:30 5 Lunático 2:58 6 Mi Confesión (Lyrics By – Diego Gaston Ponce, Lucas LapalmaRap – Koxmoz) 4:20 7 Tango Canción 4:23 8 La Vigüela 5:00 9 Criminal 3:35 10 Arrabal 3:57 11 Domingo (Voice [Spoken Word] – Jimi Santos) 4:13 12 Paris, Texas (Music By – Ry Cooder) 6:45 Christoph H. Müller - bass, keyboards, synthesizer [Speech Synthesizer], Effects [Fx] Eduardo Makaroff – acoustic guitar Philippe Cohen Solal - bass, keyboards, sounds, effects [Dub Fx] Cristina Vilallonga – vocals (tracks: 1, 3, 4, 7, 8 & 10) Pablo Agri - violin Cyril Atef - drums Lázaro Becker - violin Gustavo Beytelmann - arranger, conductor, piano Pablo Borzani - violin Joey Burns - bass (electric), bass (upright), guitar (electric), vibraphone Juan Carlos Caceres - spoken word Roberto Calomarde - violin Patrice Caratini - bass (upright) Maria Eugenia Castro - cello John Convertino - drums Raúl Di Renzo - violin Daniel Falasca Double Bass Leonardo Ferreyra Violin Nini Flores - bandoneon Rudi Flores - guitar (acoustic) Minino Garay - percussion Facundo Guevara - percussion Alexandre Jakovlev - viola Elias Khayat - violin Line Kruse - violin Demir Lulja - violin Néstor Marconi - bandoneon Apolo Novax - rap Eduardo Peroni - viola Benjamín Bru Pesce - viola Pablo Sangiorgio - violin Jorge Pérez Tedesco - cello Roberto Tormo - bass (upright) Victor Villena - bandoneon

After the global smash that was *La Revancha del Tango*, issued in 2001, expectations for Gotan Project's Philippe Cohen Solal, Christoph H. Muller, and Eduardo Makaroff were high. After all, they created a new kind of electronic fusion in taking the tango, street, and folk music forms from Latin America (played by studio musicians) and melding them with dub, downtempo, other more subtle forms of electronica. On *Lunatico* (named for tango master Carlos Gardel's racehorse), the band took a step back into the music that inspired them in the first place. They engaged a full tango quartet, with returning vocalist Cristina Villalonga, pianist and musical director Gustavo Beytelmann, and a small host of others (including desert moodscape rockers Calexico on "Amor Porteño"), a rap performed by Xoxmo, and a spoken word performance by Jimi Santos. The album was recorded alternately in Paris and Buenos Aires. Musically, *Lunatico* is adventurous, it engages the tango directly, both musically and in spirit. It mixes beats to be sure, but it's so much more musical than its predecessor by allowing strings, Nini Flores'

bandoneon, and the standup bass of Patrice Caratini to hold sway over the top of most tunes. Check the rap tune here "Mi Confesión," with Santos gliding over a swath of strings and a pulsing bandoneon. The vanguard tango of the title track, performed in 3/4 time, creates a dance rhythm that slips and swirls over sampled voices and the sound of Gardel's horse galloping. A breakbeat drum kit is layered in the choruses, and the voice of the racemaster. Then there's the nocturnal "Notas," with its loops, and over the top of a subtle layer of acoustic guitar, a narrator is speaking of the direct passion of the tango itself. Flores' bandoneon carves out a melody only to be joined by a gentle yet edgy bath of strings. "Amor Porteño," (with Villalonga and Callexico) is a strange and anxious way to open a recording. The electric guitars, piano, and spare, hypnotic drum kit begin to turn darkly as Villalonga sings her tale of passion and torment. "Criminal" is a compelling track; not because it is accessible, but because it isn't. What begins as a traditional milonga is quickly turned inside out over the course of its nearly seven minutes. It's paranoid and aesthetically moving, dramatic and seductive, as well as disorienting. Acoustic instruments begin an uptempo tango only to be driven underneath by an electric bass, samples of nearly imperceptible spoken voices, and an electronic pulse that plays a mid-tempo disco vamp. As bandoneon and strings climb atop one another, the drama in the track becomes almost unbearable, aching for release. When Beytelmann's piano reasserts the melody, both strings and synthetic elements reflect a journey which has moved away from its theme into absence, though the theme remains. "Paris, Texas" (named after the Wim Wenders film, one is to presume), reflects a journey across the desert into the el corazon sangrante of the jungle. Percussion by Facundo Guevara, on deep-tuned hand drums, hypnotize as acoustic guitar meanders through the skeletal melody and maracas and bandoneon decorate the sparse soundscape that seems to get added to with every chorus, yet remains nearly devoid of movement. Piano enters, then disappears, only to return to eventually take the cut out alone. Lunatico is a brave and exotic experiment. It breaks ground even as it re-seals the old-world tango in time and space. What remains, however, is something unspeakable, some whisper of what the past offers the future and how the future tentatively embraces it. It is a poetic, moving, and disorienting recording that comes from the shadowy worlds of history into the cloudy pre-dawn with only memories and ideas wrapped in each others clothes. Messrs. Cohen Solal, Makaroff, and Muller are to be commended for their musical bravery; it would have been so easy to repeat the formula; instead they've ventured into unknown territory. ---Thom Jurek, Rovi

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