

Billy Gibbons & The BFG's - Perfectamundo (2015)

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01. *Got Love If You Want It* 02. *Treat Her Right* 03. *You're What's Happenin', Baby* 04. *Sal Y Pimiento* 05. *Pickin' Up Chicks On Dowling Street* 06. *Hombre Sin Nombre* 07. *Quiero Mas Dinero* 08. *Baby Please Don't Go* 09. *Piedras Negras* 10. *Perfectamundo* 11. *Q-Vo*

Billy Gibbons - Guitar, Guitar (Bass), Hammond B3, Piano, Vocals Mike Flanigin - Hammond B3
Alx "Guitarzza" Garza - Guitar (Bass), Vocals Martine "G. G." Guigui - Hammond B3, Piano
Joe Hardy - Guitar, Guitar (Bass), Keyboards, Vocals G.L. Moon - Guitar Greg Morrow - Drums

ZZ Top's 2012 album *La Futura* -- their first in nearly a decade -- was widely acclaimed for bringing back the group's grimy '70s boogie, so what did Billy Gibbons choose to do for a follow-up? Naturally, he decided to leave his little old band behind so he could record *Perfectamundo* with a new group called the BFG's. *Perfectamundo* allows Gibbons to not only indulge a newfound love of Cuban rhythms -- an infatuation assisted by pianist Martin Guigui, who provides an anchor in the BFG's -- but also all the studio trickery he left behind as he worked with Rick Rubin on *La Futura*. Certainly, percolating Cuban rhythms lie at the foundation of *Perfectamundo*, but Gibbons can't resist setting everything to tightly controlled drum machines, then hauling out a bunch of studio effects, including a vocoder that pushes his gravelly croak into something slippery and sly. All this flair is a welcome reminder that, for all his vaunted blues purism, Gibbons remains something of a futurist, happily blurring the lines between the present and past along with obliterating the lines between cultures. True, some of this playfulness can result in moments that are decidedly dorky, like the opening gambit of oldies covers ("*Got Love if You Want It*," "*Treat Her Right*"), which feel stiff. "*Hombre Sin Nombre*" seems constructed to house every synthesized sound Gibbons ever imagined, "*Quiero Mas Dinero*" boasts a rap that would've seemed old-fashioned in 1989, and the chants of "baby shake that ass" on the title track are the furthest thing from sexy -- but this isn't a bug, it's a feature.

As good as it was, *La Futura* felt somewhat constrained by the concept of ZZ Top's classicism,

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whereas this record thrives on freedom, including the freedom to be ridiculous. The very fact that Perfectamundo gets silly makes it appealing: Gibbons enjoys playing with this Cuban-blues hybrid so much, he lets down his guard, allowing himself to spin out some slick, greasy solos, ride out some infectious vamps, and act like the cheerful dirty old man he is. --- Stephen Thomas Erlewine, Rovi

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