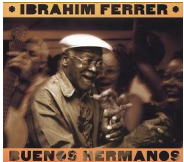


Ibrahim Ferrer – Buenos Hermanos (2003)

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Ibrahim Ferrer – Buenos Hermanos (2003)



1. Ibrahim Ferrer – Boquiñeñe (3:34) 2. Ibrahim Ferrer – Buenos Hermanos (4:37) 3. Ibrahim Ferrer – La Música Cubana (5:11) 4. Ibrahim Ferrer – Guaguancó Callejero (4:36) 5. Ibrahim Ferrer – Náufrago (3:51) 6. Ibrahim Ferrer – Como El Arrullo De Palma (4:03) 7. Ibrahim Ferrer – Perfume De Gardenia (4:44) 8. Ibrahim Ferrer – Mil Congojas (3:34) 9. Ibrahim Ferrer – Hay Que Entrarle A Palos A Éste (4:03) 10. Ibrahim Ferrer – No Tiene Telarañas (5:24) 11. Ibrahim Ferrer – Fuiste Cruel (4:28) 12. Ibrahim Ferrer – Boliviana (3:50) 13. Ibrahim Ferrer – Oye El Consejo (3:26)

Luis Alemañy Trumpet Roy Avila Cello Gil Bernal Sax (Tenor) Jimmy Carter Vocals Carla Commagere Coro Juliette Commagere Coro Joachim Cooder Drums Ry Cooder Guitar (Acoustic), Guitar (Electric), Producer Ibrahim Ferrer Composer, Primary Artist, Vocals The Five Blind Boys of Alabama Guest Artist Roberto Fonseca Piano Manuel Galbán Coro, Guest Artist, Guitar (Electric), Organ, Piano Bernardo Garcia Congas Jon Hassell Guest Artist, Trumpet Roberto Herrera Viola Flaco Jiménez Accordion, Guest Artist Jim Keltner Drums, Guest Artist Gladys Lo Cello Dennis Manuel Coro Pepe Maza Coro Eric McKinnie Vocals Modero Mekanisi Sax (Alto) Demetrio Muniz Composer, Congas, Coro, Musical Direction Alejandro Pichardo Trumpet José Antonio Rodríguez Coro Marta Salgado Viola Alfred Thompson Sax (Tenor) Alberto Valdés Coro Amadito Valdés Timbales Chucho Valdés Guest Artist, Piano Mario Villalta Cornet Joey Williams Vocals Javier Zalba Sax (Alto)

Ibrahim Ferrer, the "official" lead vocalist of Buena Vista Social Club, and producer Ry Cooder take numerous chances and many labyrinthine journeys (guaranteed to piss off all of the purists) on their third collaboration for the World Circuit/Nonesuch label, yet manage to come up with the most beautiful fruit of their collaborative efforts to date. The pair took tons of chances, recording both in Havana and in Los Angeles and bringing in not only additional musicians among Cuba's top session players -- such as guitarist and keyboardist Manuel Galban, Orlando "Cachaito" Lopez on bass, and Miguel Diaz on congas, to name three of more than a dozen -- but also adding Jim Keltner to the drum mix, along with Cooder's son, Joachim, who handles these chores on every track. Keltner, the younger Cooder, Ry, and Galban also play together on a few tracks. But add to this already eclectic mix master Cuban pianist Chucho Valdes and vanguard textural trumpeter Jon Hassell as well as the Blind Boys of Alabama on one cut and

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you have a recording that is at once celebratory, charming, eclectic, and, well, brilliant. Ferrer's talents as a vocalist transcend all boundaries and musical types, yet he makes every song a Cuban song, one rooted in the earthy spirit of his native Havana. "Perfume de Gardenias" has the Blind Boys replacing Ferrer's regular Cuban chorus of backing vocalists and features the great saxophonist Gil Bernal as well as Galban on a wonderfully understated yet commandingly melodic piano. The track lies in the seam, where the Blind Boys add a more restrained and rounded backing to Ferrer's pricelessly gorgeous croon; Bernal and Galban move this folksy ballad into the realms of a jazz/pop tune, and it still comes off as a firmly Cuban song, rooted in the heat, the rhythm, and the passion of everyday life in Havana. "Mil Congojas," which follows immediately, features the band backed by a string orchestra. Ferrer feeds off the atmospheric and allows his voice to literally drip from his throat and enter the mix as if he were singing to the angels. In addition, coming off these two ballads, so silky and gorgeous, is "Hay Que Entrale a Palo a Ese," a steaming son with a large percussion section shoring up the backing chorus and Ferrer using a rapid-fire delivery to add to the rhythmic intensity of the track. In addition, there is Valdes' "Boliviana," a folksy love song rooted in the traditional melodies of Cuban Indios and extrapolated to fit a more contemporary Afro-Cuban musical framework -- Abdullah Ibrahim himself could have composed the music here, so saturated in South African melodic and harmonic structures it is, with Valdes' sense of blurred, elongated time signatures and shifting rhythmic patterns. Hassell's trumpet adds a wonderfully simplistic element to the female backing chorus and Ferrer pours his heart into every crack and crevice of the song, splitting it wide open and letting its longing show through. The record closes with a burner, "Oy el Consejo," once again a traditional call-and-response son tuned into an intensely rhythmic polysyllabic poem via Ferrer's no-holds-barred vocal. In sum, this album reveals what is truly possible when musicians of other cultures get together to serve the music, not individual talents. And though Ferrer proves himself yet again to be one of the world's greatest treasures as a singer, he is always loyal to Cuba, ever the slave of the rhythm, ever the angel of the song itself. ---Thom Jurek, AllMusic Review

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